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CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM:

FIVE SPEECHES

BY THE

RIGHT HONORABLE BENJAMIN DISRAELI, M.P., D.C.L.

(1859-65),

EDITED (BY PERMISSION), WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

4386

JOHN F. BULLEY,

Of the Honorable Society of the Inner Temple.

TO WHICH IS ADDED AN APPENDIX.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

* * * *

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw haste, half-sister to delay.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE death of Lord Palmerston has inaugurated a new epoch in the history of Party Government, and questions, which during his lifetime were held in abeyance, are revived with an accumulated force now that he is gone. While he held the reins of power, opposing forces were kept in check, for he was the leader of many schools of political thought. He has been well compared to a bridge, connecting opposite shores, on which men were content to rest, gazing idly into the stream below. Now all is changed; that bridge is swept away; there can be no halting now; the stream runs very swift and strong, and all must boldly swim for one or other shore. The so-called tendency of the age to abolish party differences has proved a delusion, and the revival of Party Government gives but little cause for apprehension or regret. Mr. Disraeli has defined Party to be "organised opinion," and this it is which brings political controversy to single and definite issues; it is —to use the phrase, not in its vulgar but in its technical sense—the special pleading of political litigation.

The beneficial effects of the system of Party Government may be even better illustrated by a reference to the "parallelogram of forces" of mechanical science. We have seen, during a temporary suspension of its healthy action, an honest attempt at representative reform defeated by professed reformers, and a Cabinet

created to effect such reform quietly drop the question, content, for the sake of retaining office, to substitute the mechanical functions of administration for the sacred duties of Government. Parliamentary action, without the definitiveness of party warfare, becomes a chaotic nullity. In the absence of a powerful and organised criticism, measures are introduced without care and abandoned without remorse. It is only when legislation is the result of well-balanced forces, moving, as it were, at right angles to each other, that the direction of true progress is obtained.

Progress being the law of humanity—the law of national as of individual existence—we may conceive the object of every statesman to be the legitimate accomplishment of this national destiny. We may, happily, concede to the vast majority of those who aspire to political power in England, a thorough and entire honesty of purpose. England has reason to be proud of her leaders. Few other nations could boast so truly, and with such rare exceptions, of the pure-minded ambition of her statesmen. They row, so to speak, together. Some pull on the stroke side, some on the bow, of the good craft that is entered in the race of nations. But the end of each oarsman is the same; and the success of the whole crew depends on an even balance of strength. Sometimes the direction of the boat must be in the hands of one side, sometimes of the other, to round a headland or avoid a shoal. There are times, too, when a strong and skilful hand at the helm may compensate for disordered energy; but the vessel of the State may be most safely left to the stream when its course is directed by the balance of party. An honest belief in this system of government does not imply a confession of weakness in a party or an individual,

though it relinquishes all claim to the doubtful honour of an assumed infallibility. It disciplines the irregular action of personal ambition, and renders even egotism subservient to the welfare of the State.

The most prominent question of the day which has thus been revived with the revival of party warfare is that which forms the subject of the following speeches. Let us examine the relation in which it stands to one, at least, of the two great parties in the State.

The subject of Parliamentary Reform has ever occupied the attention of the Tory party and of their more modern representatives under the leadership of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli. Lord Chatham was prepared to add 100 new *County* Members to the House of Commons, but also to resist any interference with vested interests. The first Reform Bill, properly so called, was introduced by Mr. Pitt in 1785. Three years previously, he had moved for a Committee to inquire into the state of the Representative System, but the motion was lost by a majority of twenty in a House of 302 Members.

The method proposed by Mr. Pitt was: 1. To transfer the right of choosing representatives from thirty-six of such boroughs as had already, or were falling into decay, to the counties, and to such chief towns and cities as were at present unrepresented. 2. To raise a fund for the purpose of giving to the owners and holders of such boroughs disfranchised an appreciated and adequate compensation for their property. 3. The taking of this compensation to be a voluntary act on the part of such proprietors, and, if not taken at present, it should be put out at compound interest until it should become an *irresistible* bait to such holders of boroughs. 4. To extend the right of voting for knights of the

shire to copyholders as well as freeholders. Such is an outline of the first constitutional Reform Bill. It was lost on a division by 248 votes to 174.

This proposal of the great Tory statesman is characterised by that distinct recognition of acquired or prescriptive privilege which affords the only basis for the constitutional reform of our representative system. It aims at the development, not the destruction, of that privilege, and seeks to render the possession of power by a class conducive to the best interests of the community and acceptable to the mind of the people. The ever-changing conditions of society, affecting the numerical strength of a class or of a constituency, may periodically demand a redistribution of political power, yet civilisation, though it may produce new cities, does not create new classes of voters, nor does it alter the existing relations of one class to another. The first object, therefore, of those who have attempted a reform in accordance with the principles of the Constitution has been the extension, not the degradation, of the franchise—not a career of casual experiment, but a modification and development of well-defined principles, which are securely founded on the gathered wisdom of ages, and the gradual lessons of the progress of time. The boon of universal suffrage may be conceded to passion or to ignorance; but the statesman who desires honestly and conscientiously to serve his sovereign and his country, remembers that the privileges of the wealthy and intelligent are the best securities for the welfare of the people. Reform must be progressive, not destructive. The Architect may perceive that the fabric of the State requires repair, when only ignorance would suggest the expedient of demolition.

Thus to avoid the "falsehood of extremes" has ever

been the aim of the Constitutional party, with reference to this question of parliamentary representation. There has been no attempt, on their part, to check the stream of popular opinion, but so to guide it through its proper channel that its waters should not destroy in one brief moment of their frenzy the laboured cultivation of ages, but should rather, in their natural course, fertilise the soil for the fruition of posterity.

From the year 1785 to 1790, the Reform question seems to have slept. In the latter year, a motion was brought forward by Mr. Flood, who proposed to add one hundred Members to the House of Commons, to be elected by the resident householders in every county. "Resident: first, because they must be best acquainted with every local circumstance; and next, because they can attend at every place of election, with the least inconvenience to themselves, or expense to the candidate. Householders: because, being masters of families, they must be sufficiently responsible to be entitled to the franchise." Mr. Flood ably supported his motion, which was seconded by Mr. Grigby, and opposed by Mr. Wyndham; Mr. Pitt also opposed it, chiefly on the ground that the question was brought forward at an improper moment. Mr. Fox, however, affected to see great propriety in "setting about to repair, when a hurricane was near and might possibly burst forth." Burke opposed the measure, and, after a lengthened debate, it was withdrawn by its proposer.

On the 2nd of May, 1793, numerous petitions were presented to the Commons from different parts of the kingdom, praying for a consideration of the subject of Parliamentary Reform—Mr. Grey, among others, speaking to his petition at considerable length. The document which he presented was very long, and occupied nearly

half-an-hour in reading. It stated the defects which existed in the representation of the people in Parliament. It took notice of the division of the representation, or the proportions in which the different counties and boroughs contributed to the total number of the representatives, pointing out the great disproportion which in some instances arose, insomuch that the county of Cornwall alone sent more Members to Parliament than the counties of York, Rutland, and Middlesex put together. It next took notice of the distribution of the franchise, or the proportional number of voters by which their representatives were respectively returned; and pointed out that a majority of the House of Commons was returned by less than 15,000 persons out of a constituency which was very moderately estimated at three millions of adults. Further, it complained of the inequalities that arose in the distribution of the franchise among individuals; of the duration of Parliament; the mode of election and protracted polls. Finally, it protested, not without reason, against the illegal interference of the peers in the election of the peoples' representatives.

On this text Mr. Grey enlarged with much ability and some warmth. He commenced with a brief review of the history of attempts at reform, enumerating the motion of Mr. Bromley in 1733 for the repeal of the Septennial Act, the attempts of '45 and '58, together with Mr. Pitt's unsuccessful endeavours in '82, '83, and '85, and Mr. Flood's motion of '90. The Honorable Member showed how the question had been met by the weaker argument of public danger rather than by the stronger one of the absence of public necessity. He then went over the various points of his petition, and concluded with moving that it should be referred to a committee;

which was seconded by Mr. Erskine. A protracted and adjourned debate ensued, in which Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Powys, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Erskine, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Buxton, Lord Mornington, Mr. Whitbread and others, took part. Mr. Pitt then defended his conduct with regard to the question. He noticed the absence of popular opinion on the subject, and the character of the petitions, as well as the inopportuneness of bringing the question forward at that particular time. Sheridan and Fox supported the motion, which, however was lost by 282 votes to 41.

Such was the fate of the earlier attempts at a Parliamentary Reform. The measure of 1832 is too familiar to demand more than a passing allusion. "In treating the House of the Third Estate as the House of the People, and not as the House of a privileged class, the Ministry and Parliament virtually conceded the principle of Universal Suffrage. In this point of view the ten pound franchise was an arbitrary, irrational and impolitic qualification."* The immediate result of the Bill, Mr. Disraeli continues, was Chartism. It had another result in the political events of 1834; in the temporary annihilation of the Tory party.

The history and policy of the Conservative party have been hitherto misunderstood only because they have been carefully misrepresented. During the period which has elapsed between the destruction of the Tory army by Sir Robert Peel and the present day, it has been gradually gaining strength to occupy the ground formerly held by the forces then disbanded. Historically, therefore, the existence of a Constitutional party in the nineteenth century is no anachronism, for it is the

* DISRAELI: "Coningsby, or the New Generation," Book I., c. vii.

creation of its own age; and its history, as it at present exists, is the history of little more than thirty years. The principles, too, for which it contends are essentially popular, regarding as they do not the aggrandisement of any single section, but the real advancement of the whole people's welfare. The policy of the factions opposed to the Conservative party has ever been a policy of patronage. At one time the object of their condescending solicitude has been the exclusive predominance of a few "heaven-descended" families; at another, the claims of an ill-defined class that, in an age of universal energy, lays claim to a monopoly of industry. The Conservative party, on the other hand, seeks to maintain the interests of all classes alike; to preserve at once the prerogative of the Crown, the privileges of the aristocracy, the rights of the Church, and the liberties of the people. They ask "What is right?"—their opponents "What is expedient?" They would found their policy on the lessons of the past—their opponents, on the crude principles of an abstract philosophy. Their political conduct is the result of experience—that of their opponents is a course of experiment.

The conduct of this party with reference to the more important of the recent proposals of Reform, is exhibited in the following speeches. The selection, which has been condensed within the narrowest possible limits, has been made with the sole object of showing what are the opinions of the great Constitutional party on the subject, as expressed by their chosen representative and exponent. It will show wherein lies the essential difference in the principles of the two great parties in the State As an Appendix, is added a copy of the Bill introduced by Mr. Disraeli in 1859, which may be useful for reference, during the general consideration

of the subject which is forced upon the public mind by the events of the present parliamentary year. The whole question of Representative Reform resolves itself into this—Is the franchise a right or a privilege? On this point the Conservative party joins issue. Their opponents claim it as a right, but, while adopting the principle of Universal Suffrage, they have imposed a qualification which is both arbitrary and unjust. The Conservative party, on the other hand, regarding the suffrage as a privilege, are prepared to concede that privilege to all who by their intelligence or their industry are fairly entitled thereto; and they would bestow it wherever there is a reasonable hope that it will be fairly exercised in the cause of good government and the real and permanent welfare of all classes of the community.

Not only, therefore, was the Administration of 1858–9 justified in introducing its measure, but circumstances demanded the consideration of the question which was historically the province of the Constitutional party. The treatment it received affords no ground of surprise; it was unmerited though not unexpected. We may look forward with confidence to the time when the consideration of the whole subject will be undertaken, with honesty and success, by the legitimate political descendants of the First Reformer.

The distinguished Author of these speeches has accorded his full sanction to their publication: for any errors in the mode of their reproduction, for a slight curtailment, and for the preceding remarks, the Editor is alone responsible.

J. F. B.

THE TEMPLE,
February 14th, 1866.

SPEECHES.

THE GOVERNMENT REFORM BILL.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1859.

[On the assembling of the House of Commons on Monday, February 28th, 1859, the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER rose to move for leave to bring in "A Bill to amend the laws relating to the Representation of the People of England and Wales, and to facilitate the Registration and Voting of Electors." He opened by insisting that nothing could exceed the gravity of this subject :]

THOSE which are esteemed the most important political questions—those questions, for example, of peace or war, which now occupy and agitate the public mind—are in fact inferior. In either of these cases an erroneous policy may be retraced, and there are no disasters which cannot be successfully encountered by the energies of a free people; but the principles upon which the distribution of power in a community depends, when once adopted, can rarely be changed. An error in that direction may permanently affect the fortunes of a State, or the character of a people. But grave as is the duty, and difficult as is the task, which have devolved upon Her Majesty's Government, in undertaking to prepare a measure to amend the representation of the people in this House, these I admit, and cheerfully admit, are considerably

Vide Appendix, p. 118.

mitigated by two circumstances—the absence of all passion on the subject, and the advantage of experience. Whatever may be the causes, on which I care not to dwell, I believe that on this subject and on this occasion I appeal to as impartial a tribunal as is compatible with a popular form of government.

There still sit in Parliament men who took a leading part in the agitation and settlement of 1832, and feel it now possible to speak of that event with the candour of history. Looking to its results, I admit that measure to have been adequate to the emergency of the time. It was, without doubt, an experimental measure. Those who introduced it were compelled to treat the subject empirically, and some, if not many, deficiencies occurred in consequence. Since that time our progress has not only been rapid, but even precipitate. There has been no instance in history of so vast an increase of population and of capital. With that increase, the increase of intelligence has kept pace. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the former measure there were deficiencies that ought to be remedied, and omissions which ought to be supplied. In this state of things, a question in England becomes what is called a public question; Parliamentary Reform, in our present circumstances, has become a public question; a public question, in due course of time, becomes a parliamentary question; and then, as it were, shedding its last skin, it becomes a ministerial question. Reform has been for fifteen years a parliamentary question; and it is now ten years ago that the Prime Minister announced in this House that a change ought to be made. Events prevented that opinion from being acted upon, but in 1852, in this very month of February, the Speech from the Throne proclaimed the necessity of making a change in the Act

of 1832. In consequence, a measure of Parliamentary Reform was brought forward by the Prime Minister of the day.* A change of administration prevented that measure from being proceeded with. Two years later, a Minister born and bred in the Tory camp was also of opinion that it was his duty to recommend a measure of Reform to his Sovereign, and an announcement to that effect was once more made in the Royal Speech of 1854. In consequence, a second measure was brought forward by the Government of Lord Aberdeen. The great war which succeeded it, again prevented it from being proceeded with. Before that war ended another change in the administration took place, and the noble Viscount† succeeded to the head of affairs. He might well be compared to the two distinguished men who preceded him, a statesman renowned not only for his ability, but his great experience, and who, from his political prejudices—if he has any—or, rather, I will say from his superiority to prejudices, was considered a statesman who has no morbid sympathy with advanced opinions. And yet Lord Palmerston, too, repeated to the Sovereign the advice given by Lord John Russell and Lord Aberdeen; and the Royal Speech for 1857, for the third time, proclaimed that the attention of the Legislature would be called to Parliamentary Reform.

When Lord Derby succeeded to office under these circumstances, what was his duty in relation to this subject? Evasion might have been possible, but it would not have been congenial. Was the question to be left for the reorganisation of an Opposition, the desperate resources of faction and the chronic excitement of the popular mind? Are the interests of this country of complicated civilisation to be left to the

* Lord John Russell. † Palmerston.

distraction of political irritations? It was the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet that the question should be dealt with, and that in a sincere and earnest spirit. They were told that it was not for Lord Derby to take up the question. What has there been in the previous career of Lord Derby to preclude him from doing so? The name of Mr. Stanley was associated with that of Lord John Russell in the construction of the Act of '32; and I myself, speaking in the name of the Conservative party, have repeatedly declared that while the Conservative party was content to abide by the compact which was wrung from them in 1835, by taunts and reproaches as to their insincerity in professing to be bound by the Act of 1832, they would not shrink from its candid reconsideration, making every effort to improve the representation of the people.

Parliamentary reformers may be divided into two classes. One of those would adapt the settlement of 1832 to the circumstances of 1859, acting in the spirit and according to the genius of the Constitution. In that class may be reckoned Her Majesty's Ministers. But there is another school of reformers, having objects very different from those which I have named. The new school is of opinion that the chief, if not the sole, object of representation is to realise the opinion of the numerical majority of the country. Now, Sir, there is no doubt population is, and must always be, one of the elements of our representative system. There is also such a thing as property, and that, too, must be considered. I am ready to admit that the new school has not on any occasion limited the elements of their representative system solely to population. They have, with a murmur, admitted that property has an equal claim to consideration; but then, they have said that property

and population go together. Well, Sir, population and property do go together—in statistics, but in nothing else—population and property do not go together in politics and practice. I cannot agree with the principles of the new school, either if population or property is the sole, or if both together constitute a double standard. I think the function of this House is something more than merely to represent the population and property of the country. This House, in my opinion, ought to represent all the interests of the country. Now, those interests are sometimes antagonistic, they are competing, they are always independent and jealous; yet they all demand a distinctive representation in this House, and how can that be effected, under such circumstances, by the simple representation of the voice of the majority, or even of the preponderance of property? If the function of this House is to represent all the interests of the country, you must, of course, have a representation scattered over the country, because interests are necessarily local.

Let me take, by way of illustration, the two cases of the metropolis and of Scotland; the population of the two are, at this time, about equal. The wealth of the metropolis and the wealth of the kingdom of Scotland are very unequal. The wealth of the metropolis yields a yearly income of £44,000,000, upon which the assessment under the great schedules of the income-tax is levied, while the amount upon which assessment is levied under those schedules in Scotland is only £30,000,000; there is, therefore, the difference between £44,000,000 and £30,000,000; yet who would for a moment pretend that the various classes and interests of that country could be adequately represented by the same number of Members as represent the metropolis? So much for

the population test. Let us now take the property test. Let us take one portion of that very metropolis to which I have this moment referred; the wealth of the City of London is more than equivalent to that of 25 English and Welsh counties returning 40 Members, and of 140 boroughs returning 232 Members. The City of London—the City proper—is richer than Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham put together, or, take another and even more pregnant formula, the City of London is richer than Bristol, Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield, Hull, Wolverhampton, Bradford, Brighton, Stoke-upon-Trent, Nottingham, Greenwich, Preston, East Retford, Sunderland, York and Salford combined, towns which return among them no less than 31 Members. The City of London has not asked me to insert it in this Bill for 31. I have heard that there is another measure of reform in hand. Whether the Noble Lord* has made his arrangements according to the statistical return, we shall probably know some day or other; but the citizens of London have acted with great modesty and propriety. They seem to be satisfied with their representation, and to consider that, probably, no place requires a greater number of Members than the City of London at present possesses. Perhaps they have some suspicion that, if they have more Members, they would find some difficulty in obtaining men who were competent to discharge that office. So much for the population test and so much for the property test, if you are to reconstruct this House on either of these principles; but the truth is, that men are sent to this House to represent the opinions of a place and not its power. The constitution shrinks from a plurality of representation

* J. Russell.

for large towns as from a plurality of votes for rich men. The influence of London and Manchester in the House of Commons is not limited to the vote of the Members for those places. There is one remarkable circumstance connected with the new school who would build up our representation on the basis of a numerical majority, and take population as their standard. It is this, that none of their principles apply except in cases where population is concentrated.

Why, Sir, it is notorious that, if you come to population, in round numbers, 10,500,000 of the people of England return only 150 or 160 County Members, whilst the boroughs, representing 7,500,000, return more than 330 Members. Admitting, then, the principle of population, which is the principle of the new school, I say you must disfranchise your boroughs and give their Members to the counties. Let us now see, Sir, what will be the consequence if the population principle is adopted. You would have a House, generally speaking, formed partly of great landowners and partly of manufacturers. I have no doubt that, whether we look to their property or to their character, there would be no country in the world which could rival in respectability such an assembly. But would it be a House of Commons—would it represent the country—would it represent the various interests of England? Why, Sir, after all, the suffrage and the seat, respecting which there is so much controversy and contest, are only means to an end. They are means by which you may create a representative assembly, that is, a mirror of the mind as well as the interests of England. You want in this House every element that obtains the respect and engages the interest of the country. You must have lineage and great territorial property; you must have

manufacturing enterprise of the highest character and commercial weight; you must have professional ability in all its forms, but you want something more—you want a body of men not too intimately connected either with agriculture or with manufactures, or with commerce—not too much wedded to professional thought and professional habits—you want a body of men representing the vast variety of the English character—men who would arbitrate between the claims of those great predominant interests—men who would temper the acerbity of those huge conflicting interests. You want a body of men to represent that immense portion of the community who cannot be ranked under any of those striking and powerful classes to which I have referred, but who are in their aggregate equally important and valuable, and perhaps as numerous. Hitherto you have been able to effect this object. You have effected it by the existing borough system, which has given you a number of constituencies of various dimensions distributed over the country. No one for a moment pretends that the borough system of representation in England was originally framed that it should represent all the classes and interests of the country; but it has been kept and cherished because the people found that, although not directly intended for such a purpose, yet indirectly it has accomplished that object; and hence I lay it down as a principle which ought to be adopted, that if you subvert that system you are bound to substitute for it machinery equally effective. That is all I ask. I am not wedded to arrangements merely because they are arrangements; but what I hope this House will not sanction is, that we should remove a machinery which performs the office we desire unless we are certain that we can substitute

for it a machinery equally effective. Now, there is one remarkable feature in the agitation of the new school; it is not that they offer us a new machinery for the old machinery they would abrogate, but that they offer no substitute for the system they would subvert. They lay down their inexorable principle; they carry it to its logical consequences, and the logical consequences would be that to this House, in the present state of the population, no doubt, you would have men returned by large constituencies, who would in most instances represent great wealth. I will make that concession—but when this House is assembled, how will it perform the duties of a House of Commons? I will tell you what must be the natural consequences of such a state of things; the House would lose, as a matter of course, its hold on the executive. The House will assemble; it will have men sent to it, no doubt, of character and wealth, the great majority of them matured and advanced in life, and having met here, they will be unable to carry on the executive of the country.

(Mr. BRIGHT: "Why?")

Why? Because the experiment has been tried in every country, and the same result has occurred; because it is not in the power of one or two classes to give that variety of character and requirement by which the administration of this country can be carried on. Well, then, if this House loses its hold over the executive of the country, what happens? we fall back on a beaureaucratic system, and we should find ourselves, after all our struggles, exactly in the same position which in 1640 we had to extricate ourselves from. Your administration would be carried on by a minister, a court-favourite. It might not be in these our times, but in

some future time. The result of the system would be to create an assembly where the Members of Parliament, though chosen by great constituencies, would be chosen from limited classes, and perhaps only one class of the community. There is another new school of philosophers, who are of opinion that there is no such thing as progress; that nations move in a circle, and that after a certain cycle they arrive at exactly the same place and stand in precisely the same circumstances which they quitted two or three centuries before; and I am quite sure that if this House were reformed and reconstructed on the new principle of population, that would occur. I have no time now to solve a problem of that depth. Such metaphysical subjects require the study and retirement of the Opposition benches. But if the new system were adopted, I feel quite persuaded that the House of Commons, after all its reform and reconstruction, would find itself in the same comparatively ignominious position from which the spirit and energy of the old English gentry emancipated it more than two centuries ago.

I now come to the question of the state of the franchise. Natural as is the desire to exercise the franchise, we have never, in any of the arrangements which we shall propose to Parliament to adopt, considered for a moment whether they would increase or whether they would diminish the constituent body. Our sole object has been to confer the franchise on all of those to whom we thought that privilege might be safely entrusted, and who would exercise it for the general welfare of the country. I will, with the permission of the House, address myself first to the borough franchise. The Reform Act of 1832, acknowledging to a certain degree some of the old franchises of

the boroughs, which exist but to a very limited extent at present, established the franchise in boroughs on the occupation of a house of £10 value. There is a wish—I could once have said a general wish—that instead of the household suffrage being founded on that value, it should be founded by preference on rating.

I am not at all surprised that more than one gentleman has received this observation with marks of assent and sympathy. I confess myself that I was always much biassed in favour of that idea. It appears to me that if you make—to me a common phrase—the rate-book the register, you very much simplify the business of registration; but, when you come to examine this matter in detail, in order to see how it will act, you will find that it is involved in difficulties—great, all acknowledge—and I am sorry to be obliged to confess, to my mind, insurmountable. For the purpose of securing the advantage of having the rate-book the register, you must, of course, leave perfect discretion to the overseer. The overseer has an interest in raising rates, people may say; or he may be a very hot political partisan. Are you prepared to leave to the overseer the absolute discretion of appointing those who are to exercise the suffrage? Some will say we must have some check. But what is a check but an appeal? and, if you appeal, you cannot do better than appeal to the revising barrister. If you have an appeal to some other parochial officer, you appeal to an inferior tribunal; and indeed, unless you permitted the overseers to be unchallenged, you could not make the rate-book the register. But even, beyond this, there are other difficulties which you will find most perplexing. Notwithstanding the Parochial Assessment Act, the rating of this country is most unequal, and it is only those

whose business it has been to examine into the subject in its very minute details who can be aware of the preposterous consequences which would arise from adopting a rating instead of a value qualification. Take the present qualification of £10 value, which, it is very generally and popularly supposed, might be supplied by an £8 rating. Now let us see what would be the consequence upon the present constituency of adopting an £8 rating instead of a £10 value. I will take the instance of Boston, represented by my Honorable and Learned Friend behind me (Mr. Adams). The borough of Boston consists of two parishes; the rating of one of them is upon one-half the value, and of the other upon two-thirds of the value. The practical consequence of having an £8 rating in Boston would be to disfranchise 400 of the electors of that borough, who may or may not be supporters of my Honorable Friend. Then taking the case of another borough—Dover—if you had in that borough a franchise based upon £8 rating, instead of £10 value, you would exactly double the constituency. I have taken these two instances from a great number of others, and the House will see that the idea of establishing a franchise based upon rating, instead of upon occupation value, is by no means the simple task it is by some persons supposed to be. The great objection to such a measure, which led me entirely to relinquish all idea of adopting it, is that its tendency must be directly to disfranchise many of the constituencies. I contend that the borough franchise is not monotonous, but that it is accessible, universal, and affords a fair presumption that the holder is qualified. But I am ready to admit that there are many persons quite capable of exercising the suffrage who do not live in £10 houses, and whom

I should wish to see possessing the suffrage. But should we obtain that result by the coarse and common expedient of what is called "lowering the franchise in towns"? Now, I beg the House to consider for a moment what must be the effect of lowering the franchise in towns. Suppose that, instead of a £10 you had a £5 borough qualification. Well, the moment that you had a £5 borough qualification you would realise all those inconvenient results which are erroneously ascribed to the £10 qualification. You would then have a monotonous constituency, whose predominant opinions would be identical. You would then have a constituency who would return to Parliament Members holding the same ideas, the same opinions, the same sentiments; and all that variety which represents the English character would be entirely lost. You would then have in your borough constituency a predominant class, and certainly the spirit and genius of our Constitution are adverse to the predominance of any class in this House. It certainly would be most injudicious, not to say intolerable, when we are guarding ourselves against the predominance of a territorial aristocracy and a manufacturing oligarchy, that we should reform Parliament by securing the predominance of a household democracy. I am convinced that that is not the mode in which you must improve and vary the elements of the present borough constituency. We think, Sir, that there are modes by which that object can be adequately and efficiently attained, and if the House will permit me I will now proceed to describe them.

We propose to introduce into these borough constituencies new franchises. In the first place we shall introduce, as the foundation of the suffrage, a class of property which hitherto has not formed

an element out of which voters have been created—I mean personal property. We shall propose to allow persons who have funded property—property in Bank Stock or in East India Stock and bonds—to the amount of £10 per annum, to exercise the suffrage. I know the objection which may be urged by some persons against the introduction of this qualification. They will point out the difficulties there will be in securing the due exercise of the suffrage if that element is introduced. The House will pardon me on this occasion, when I have to travel over a vast field, and when I must confine myself to the chief features of the measure I am recommending to their notice, if I abstain from entering into that question. Enough for me now to say, that the Bill which I have here, and which, with the permission of the House, I shall introduce, provides, in our opinion, a satisfactory and secure machinery by which this and all other similar franchises to which I am about to advert may be exercised. Now, Sir, there is another franchise which we shall also recommend the House to adopt, and that is one which depends upon the possession of a certain sum in the savings bank. A man who has had £60 for a year in a savings bank will, under this Bill, if it becomes law, be an elector for the borough in which he resides. Again, a man who has a pension for public service, but who has ceased to be employed in that service, whether it be Her Majesty's naval, military or civil service, to the amount of £20 a year, will, under this Bill, if it becomes law, be entitled to a vote wherever he may reside. Then again, Sir, the occupant of a portion of a house, the aggregate rent of which amounts to £20 a year, which would be 8*s.* a week, will also be entitled to a vote. The House has heard much of late years of what is called an educa-

tional franchise. I am bound to say, that no plan for the creation of an educational franchise, in a very precise sense of that word, which in their opinion would work satisfactorily, has been brought under the consideration of the Government. It has indeed been proposed that the basis of such a franchise should be sought for among the members of the various learned societies. But, as it has been very accurately observed, it does not follow that the members of learned societies should themselves be learned. In these days we frequently see names followed by an amount of alphabetical combination which is almost appalling; yet though we associate the highest learning, the greatest antiquarian and scientific acquirements with those persons, it sometimes turns out that they only possess a respectable character and pay ten guineas a year. An educational franchise, according to that high empyrean of imagination which some have attempted to reach, has baffled all our practical efforts. But it will be our duty to recommend to the house that the privilege of a vote, irrespective of the more formal qualification arising from property, should be conferred upon those classes whose education has involved some considerable investment, many of them, no doubt, exercising the franchise under the previous qualifications which I have described. We have thought it advisable that the suffrage should be conferred upon graduates of all universities, upon the ministers of religion, whether priests and deacons of the Church, or ministers of denominations—under regulations which the house will find in the Bill; upon the members of the legal profession in all its branches, whether barristers, members of the inns of court, solicitors, or proctors; and upon all members of the medical body who are registered under the late Medical Act. To these we

have added such schoolmasters as possess a certificate from the Council.

Sir, there are some other franchises which it is our intention to give to the borough constituencies; but before I touch upon them, it will be convenient that I should call the attention of the House to the subject of the county franchise. Previous to the Reform Act of 1832, the general franchise of England may be described popularly—though technically, perhaps such a description is not quite correct—as a franchise which in the counties arose from property, and in the boroughs from occupation. When the measure, passed in 1832, was first introduced, that distinction was recognised by the statesmen who had the preparation and conduct of the Bill. I have no doubt they deeply considered that question at the time; nor can it be denied that if the constituencies had remained as they proposed them, the principle thus set up would have been a distinct and clear one. Whether, however, the distinction could have been long maintained, I may, with great humility, be permitted to doubt, looking at the immense expansion of the country, at its vast increase in wealth and population, and not only in wealth and population, but in those distinctive interests which seek representation in this House—remembering the 10,500,000 inhabitants of counties to whom I have already alluded—I venture humbly to doubt whether that distinction could have long been kept up. That its maintenance was convenient to the statesmen of 1832, who had immense difficulties to contend with, I can easily conceive; but whatever was their intention, they were disappointed in the plan which they had prepared, and circumstances occurred in this House which changed the character of the franchise, and destroyed that distinction between

property and occupation which the Ministry of Lord Grey had sought to establish. Now the individual responsible for that change was the noble Duke who was my predecessor in the seat which I now unworthily fill, and as his conduct in this respect has often been challenged, and as there are many who now deplore the course which he then took, perhaps, the House will for a moment permit me, who am well aware of the motives which influenced him, to state the reasons which induced Lord Chandos to move successfully in this House the celebrated clause that bears his name. When the Reform Bill was introduced in 1831, it was generally avowed, that the object of that measure was to give a legitimate position in the Legislature to the middle classes of England. That was the object avowed by the Ministry, and its propriety was generally acknowledged by the country. Now, when the principle that the middle classes should be represented in this House was laid down, Lord Chandos, who was then the member for the county of Buckingham, being a man who lived much among his neighbours, and who was familiar with the character and interests of rural society, naturally felt what he considered the great absurdity that the most important portion of the middle classes—the most important even at this day, because they are the greatest employers of labour—I mean the farmers of England—should not possess the suffrage, and it was with that view that Lord Chandos moved the clause. The sympathy of the House was so great in its favour (a sympathy not confined to party; Mr. Hume was a supporter of the Chandos Clause), that the Noble Lord who then led the House, Lord Althorp, felt it his duty to yield to it. But that happened then, which sometimes does happen, when great measures are brought forward by a Ministry, and an

important amendment is introduced successfully by an eager Opposition. Those who have had the preparation of great and important measures—and I see many present upon whom that task has devolved—know the great difficulty, the long anxiety, the constant hesitation which are involved in such a task, and how hard it is to adapt one part to another, and to obtain that general harmony which will meet public wants, and which will give you a chance of carrying your measures successfully through. But when a Leader of Opposition carries an amendment which he believes to be necessary, he thinks only of the proposal which he is making to the House, and if the Ministry are obliged to adopt it, it very often does not fit in with their previous design; it does not display the harmony and unison which would perhaps have been the case had they themselves devised it, with due regard for the other details of the measure. I have no doubt that had the Government thought fit, in 1831–2, to introduce the principle of occupation in the county franchise, they might have rendered it so homogeneous with their great scheme, that it would have worked with perfect facility: that we should long ere this have been quite accustomed to its operation, and then those distinctions and difficulties which have since arisen might never have been heard of. But there is no doubt that, from the moment or shortly after this £50 occupation clause was put into operation, feelings of dissatisfaction and suspicion were excited in the minds of the community. Occupiers in the county of less than £50 —say of £40 or £20—who, if the principle had not been admitted, would probably never have thought themselves injured, naturally looked with great soreness on the man who had voted in a borough because he had an occupation of £10. That feeling of dissatisfaction

was unfortunately followed by those industrial controversies, respecting the origin or end of which it is unnecessary to say anything, but which were prolonged, and which undoubtedly occasioned great bitterness among all classes. That feeling of dissatisfaction became a feeling of distrust. It was said that commercial changes were prevented in this country, chiefly by this £50 tenancy clause. The men who acted under that clause—and take them altogether, I do not believe that a more valuable class to whom to intrust the franchise could be found—were described in this house as men void of all patriotism and public spirit, exercising the suffrage without the slightest effort of intelligence, merely at the beck of their landlords. Nothing can be more exaggerated or groundless than the sentiments which have been expressed in this House on the effect of the Chandos clause, and on the influence which it has on popular election. In the first place, voters under the Chandos clause at no time ever exceeded one-fifth of the constituent bodies of counties. Therefore, had they all voted the same way, they never could have exercised that influence upon public events which has been ascribed to them. But the proprietary of the soil does not rest with the Tories and Conservatives. There are Whig landlords, and many considerable Whig landlords—the proprietary of the soil is distributed among proprietors of all opinions, and the consequence is, that if you look at the elections, you will find that those who voted under the Chandos clause were much divided—often equally divided. It is not true, therefore, that those who vote under this qualification have exercised any very great influence upon the legislation of this country, or that they are a class who have acted always without intent or meaning. There is no doubt that the dissatisfaction,

followed by distrust and misrepresentation, did raise in the country an idea that the county representation was an exclusive representation, that it was animated only by one object, that it had a selfish interest always before it, and that it had not that sympathy with the community which we desire in that chosen body to whom the privilege of election—the highest privilege in the State—is entrusted. An effort was made by means of the forty shilling freehold, which was retained in counties, to counteract the exaggerated influence of the £50 tenancy voters. A manufacture of votes—from the facts before me I am entitled so to call it—was carried on in the boroughs, by which it was supposed that the injurious influence of the tenants living upon the land, dwelling in the counties, might be counteracted. For the last fifteen years—for the last ten years at a very great rate—this has been going on, until it has really arrived at this point, that the number of county voters who do not dwell in the counties now exceeds the number of those who vote under the £50 clause. It was proclaimed with great triumph that when a gentleman stood for a county, his neighbours who dwell in the county might vote for him, but some large town in the district would pour out its legions by railway, and on the nomination of some club in the town would elect the representative for the county. The dwellers in the county found themselves not represented in many instances by those who lived among them. A sort of civil war was raised in this manner, and if Honorable Gentlemen look into the statistics on this point they will see that what I may call an unnatural state of things was brought about—because, there is no doubt that what we seek is that a man should vote for the place where he resides, or for the locality in which he is really and substantially

interested. That is a state of affairs which is much to be deprecated. It is of the greatest importance that those who vote, whether in a borough or county constituency, should sympathise with the community in which they exercise that important right. A man who votes for a place where he resides or in which he has an interest, votes with a greater sense of responsibility than what I may call a mere stranger. Where, then, when we are considering the condition and the elements of the constituency of the country, when we are endeavouring to reconstruct it on a broad basis, which would admit within its pale all those who are trustworthy, shall we look for means by which we may terminate these heart-burnings, and restore the constituencies of England to what I will venture to call their natural elements? No doubt, it is a labour of great difficulty. Can it be done by reconstruction—can it be done by re-arrangement? It may be possible to pass a law which would remove these strangers from the sphere of political power. Perhaps it may not be possible to pass such a law, but, whether it be or not, who would be rash enough to propose it? How should we terminate these misunderstandings, how restore that good feeling—that which Lord Clarendon called the "good-nature of the English people,"—if we took a course which would give occasion to a perpetual agitation for the removal of the restrictions which we had succeeded in establishing? Her Majesty's Government have given to this subject the most anxious consideration. I may say that if labour, if thought could assist us to arrive at a proper solution, neither labour nor thought has been spared. Is there any principle on which we can restore the county constituency to its natural state, and bring about that general and constant sympathy between the two portions

of the constituent body which ought to exist? Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that some such solution does exist. We think there is a principle, the justness of which will be at once acknowledged, the logical consequences of which will be at once remedial, and which, if applied with due discretion, will effect all those objects which we anxiously desire with respect to the county constituency. We find that principle in recognizing the identity of suffrage between county and town. I will proceed to show the House what, in our opinion, would be the practical consequences of recognizing that identity. If the suffrages of the town are transferred to the county, and the suffrages of the county transferred to the town, all those voters who, dwelling in a town, exercise their suffrage in the county in virtue of a county suffrage, will record their votes in the town, and the forty shilling freeholder resident in a town—subject to provisions in the Bill which would prevent the constitutional instrument being turned to an improper use—will have a right to vote for the borough in which he resides. This, as well as the franchise founded on savings banks, will open another avenue to the mechanic, whose virtue, prudence, intelligence, and frugality entitle him to enter into the privileged pale of the constituent body of the country. If this principle be adopted, a man will vote for a place where he resides, and with which he is substantially connected. Therefore the first measure would embody this logical consequence—that it would transfer the freeholders of the town from the county to the town. But if this principle be adopted, there are other measures in our opinion it would be the duty of Parliament in this respect to adopt. Since the year 1832, there has been an immense increase in the population of this country, irrespective of the ratio of in-

crease with which we are acquainted. The creation of railroads in particular districts has stimulated that increase; and this has come to pass in England, that in a great many of the boroughs there is a population residing, who for all social and municipal purposes are part and parcel of the community, but who for parliamentary purposes are pariahs. A man votes for a municipality, he pays parochial rates and taxes, he is called upon to contribute to all purposes of charity and philanthropy in the borough, but because he lives in a part of the borough which exceeds the boundary that was formed in 1832, he is not, though he lives in a £10 house, permitted to vote for Members of Parliament. Now all this extramural population, in fact and in spirit, consists of persons who ought to be electors in the boroughs in which they reside, and we, therefore, propose that Boundary Commissioners should visit all the boroughs of England, and re-arrange them according to the altered circumstances of the time. I know that these Boundary Commissioners may cause some alarm in this country. I know there are traditions of party arrangements effected by that machinery which, whether true or not, left an unpopular recollection in the House of Commons. I believe that, in the present state of public feeling on this subject, so moderate as it is, and in the present balanced state of parties, no partial or improper conduct of that character, if it ever did take place, could be repeated. But it is quite unnecessary for me to dwell upon this point, because Her Majesty's Ministers are so circumstanced, that they can in that respect make a proposition to the House which will at once divert it of all suspicion. Since the Reform of 1832, machinery has arisen in this country perfectly competent to effect that which we believe to be so

necessary—I mean the Inclosure Commissioners. There is a body of men totally independent of all party; and we propose to delegate to them the fulfilment of this office. They will appoint Deputy-Commissioners who will visit the boroughs. The Deputy-Commissioners will make their reports to the Secretary of State; the Secretary of State will embody them in a Bill, and that Bill will be subjected to criticism in this House. After that, no one can for a moment suspect that there will be any opportunity of making arrangements favourable to any party. The House has a right to ask me whether Her Majesty's Government have formed any estimate of what may be the consequences of the change which we propose in the numbers of the county constituencies. That is, no doubt, a point upon which one must speak with some degree of hesitation; but there are some materials in existence which are furnished by the papers before the House, and there are others which are at our command. This morning, there was put into my hand a pamphlet—probably a proof—published to-day. It is by a gentleman who ranks, I believe, as the most eminent statistical authority in the country, who is well-known to gentlemen in this House, and who has often been examined before our committees—Mr. Newmarch. Mr. Newmarch estimates that the gross increase that would be occasioned in the county voters by a £10 county franchise, would be 103,000. I have no time to ascertain what are the data on which Mr. Newmarch makes his calculation, but I should be disingenuous if I did not acknowledge to the House that the estimate formed by Her Majesty's Ministers is much more considerable. I should suppose the addition to the county constituency would be not less than 200,000, one-half of which would be furnished by what staticians call the

north-western and the south-eastern groups of counties —that is to say, Cheshire, Lancashire, and the West Riding on the one hand, and Kent, Sussex, and part of Surrey on the other. With reference to those gentlemen who have on various occasions expressed their opinion that the £20 occupation franchise is one which they should prefer to see adopted, I would observe, that the number between a £20 and a £10 franchise, would, I think, be described by the figure 100,000. But, with reference to the change of the county constituency from £50 to £20, I would venture to observe that, having given to this subject very considerable pains, so far as I can form an opinion, there is nothing in an additional £10 house in a county which would make me trust the loyalty and respectability of one who lived in a £20 house, in preference to one who lived in a £10 house. I am also bound to be candid, and say that the estimate of 200,000 voters has been made irrespective of what the effects of the labour of the Boundary Commissioners may be. I have heard many arguments against the proposition, but only to one of them would I attach much weight, and to that not for its strength, but for the phrase which is used to clothe it. I allude to the objection that the identity which this proposition would introduce between the county and the town constituencies, may lead to what are called electoral districts. Now, if the only protection of the English people from electoral districts is a difference of £10 in an occupation franchise between the county and the town, then I am afraid that electoral districts cannot be resisted. But, believing as I do that there is nothing more unpopular in this country than electoral districts, and that they are alien to all the cus-

toms, manners, and associations of the people, I have no fear whatever that this scheme will be adopted, until Englishmen have lost all pride in their country, and all fondness for the localities in which they have lived. Why, Sir, electoral districts can never be established until you recognise the voice of a numerical majority as the right principle of representation in this House. They can be formed upon no other principle, and the measures which it is my duty to introduce on the part of the Government to the House to-night, have no other object but to assert these right principles upon which the representation in this House has always been based. I have now, very imperfectly, and omitting many points, placed before the House a general view of what we propose to do with the constituent body of the country. Our object is to reconstruct that body, with no more view of increasing its numerical amount, but solely with the object of improving it, by the addition of various classes and individuals to whom the privilege of the franchise may be trusted, with safety to the State and benefit to the community. If the measure we recommend be adopted, you will have a great homogeneous constituency, with a great variety of character—for variety in the franchise is perfectly consistent with the identity of the suffrage; you will have a great homogeneous body, between the different sections of which there will no longer exist feelings of dissatisfaction and distrust. The elector will elect a man of the community in which he lives, and he will exercise the right under the high sense of duty that influences Englishmen in performing it. I have always thought the idea of a constituency in England should be this—it should be numerous enough to be independent, and select enough

to be responsible; and that is the constituency Her Majesty's Ministers believe will be formed by the measure I propose to the House to-night.

Coming to that part of our Bill which concerns the mode of registration and of voting, I would propose that in future there should be a self-acting register for the counties; that the overseer of each parish should make out a list of owners and occupiers, which could be revised and added to subsequently. Under this plan no one need make a claim to be registered, unless he finds his name omitted as to the mode of voting. I propose in the first instance greatly to increase the number of polling places. There would be one polling place in every parish where there are 200 electors, and when the number is less, the parishes would be grouped till they reached that number, and a polling place established for each group. Each voter would vote for the place where he resided, and therefore a residence qualification register would be kept as well as a property qualification register. The expense of the various polling places would be thrown upon the counties. I would not compel all voters to vote personally, and should, therefore, propose that the voters might make use of "voting papers." That system has been tried elsewhere, and the consequence was that 90 per cent of the electors voted for the guardians of the poor, while for the Legislature of this great country only 50 or 60 per cent voted. I believe that a machinery might be devised which would prevent all attempts at deception or personification, which, if attempted, would be held a misdemeanour. In approaching this part of my subject, I would observe that a complete representation does not depend upon the electoral body; it also depends upon whether the different interests of the country

are adequately represented. Now, discarding for ever that principle of population upon which it has been my duty to make some remarks, we have felt that on this occasion it was incumbent on us diligently and even curiously to investigate the whole of England, and see whether there were interests not represented in this House whose views we should wish to be heard here, and whether the general representation of the country could be matured and completed. In undertaking this office, it must not be supposed that we have been animated by a feeling that we would only do that which the hard necessity of the case required. Had we been so influenced, it is possible we might have brought forward a measure that would have served the purpose of the moment, and yet left seeds behind us which might have germinated in future troubles, controversies, and anxieties. We have been sincerely desirous to adapt the scheme of 1832 to the England of 1859, and to induce the House to come to a general settlement, whether as regards the exercise of the franchise or the direct representation in this House of the various interests of the community, which should take this question for a long period out of the agitating thoughts of men. We have sought to offer to the country, in the hope that it will meet with its calm and serious approval, what we believe to be a just and—I will not say a final, but—conclusive settlement. Finality, Sir, is not the language of politics. But it is our duty to propose an arrangement which, as far as the circumstances of the age in which we live can influence our opinion, will be a conclusive settlement, and we have laid it down as our task to consider, without any respect to persons, what we honestly think are the interests in the country that are not represented, but which we should at this moment

counsel the House to add to their numbers. I venture to divide this branch of the subject into the cases where there is a want of representation and those where a representation exists, and not an adequate one. We find both of these circumstances characteristic of the West Riding of Yorkshire and South Lancashire. There there are distinct interests which are not represented in this House, and some, also, which are very inadequately represented. I mean by the term inadequately represented, to say that there are several distinct interests, while the present Members are returned to this House by the predominant interest; the other interests, which are considerable enough to challenge and claim our consideration, being virtually unrepresented. We propose, therefore, to add to the West Riding of Yorkshire four Members. Here I will not speak of population or property, because we are not about to offer a proposition to the House formed merely upon population or property. In the West Riding we find a great territory seventy miles in length, which is purely agricultural. We find another great division studded with towns, none of them important enough, or having distinctive interests enough, to be represented, yet in their aggregate constituting a wonderful hive of industry and energy; and there is still another portion of the West Riding where there are blended and varied interests. We propose, therefore, to add four Members to the West Riding of Yorkshire, and to divide it, not according to a mathematical arrangement as to population, but according to its separate interests. This principal of division will be in accordance with the local demarcations of wapentakes. If property be the test, the property here is identical; for, however varied in the number of their population, the property

of the wapentakes is as follows:—We propose that there should be a West Yorkshire with a population of 472,000, and a property of £963,000. That is the division in which you will find Keighley, Dewsbury, and a score of towns which you cannot summon here, but which, if you adopt these principles for your constituent body, would be voting for County Members, and therefore they ought to vote with the distinct interests with which they are connected. We propose that there shall be a North-west Yorkshire with a population of 129,000, and a South Yorkshire with one of 225,000. We propose these divisions, instead of an endless division and subdivision without names, which is little in harmony with our habits, and because these are the names which are used in the locality. With respect to the property of these divisions, varying as they do in interest and population, its amount is almost identical in each. In one of them the assessment to the county-rates is £963,000, in another £809,000, and in the third £808,000. We propose to add two Members to South Lancashire; that is to say, we propose to distribute the county of Lancashire into three divisions. One will be the hundred of West Derby, and one the hundred of Salford. These divisions are the same as those proposed by the Noble Lord the Member for London, except that one of the hundreds of North Lancashire was inserted in West Derby in his Bill, and it now remains with North Lancashire. This will be an addition of six to the number of County Members. There is another county to which we propose to add two Members, and that is the county of Middlesex which we propose to divide. By dividing Middlesex, the claims of Kensington, and Chelsea, and Hammersmith, and a hundred other suburban districts, the claims of which have been urged in this House, will be

provided for. They will form part of South Middlesex, while the distinctive interests of the other portion of the county, the northern division, will also be represented in this House. These are all the additions that we propose to make to the representation of the counties—eight Members. It is now, Sir, my duty to call the attention of the House to those places which, because they possess distinct interests which are not duly represented in this House, ought, in our opinion, to be distinctly represented here. The first place which, in our opinion, ought to be represented in the House of Commons is the town of Hartlepool and its immediate district. There is no place in England more distinguished by the energy of its inhabitants, its rapid progress, and the character of its industry. In North Durham there are four great towns which are represented, and there are two county Members; in South Durham there are two county Members and no town which is represented. I will not dwell on the population of Hartlepool; I will not rest the granting of a Member on that basis, though the population is very considerable—upwards of 30,000; but I rest it upon the rapid development of its considerable industry, and the very fact that at this moment its importation of foreign goods is larger than that even of Newcastle. We therefore propose that there should be a Member for Hartlepool. For the same reason that it is a place where the shipping and mercantile interests of the country are conspicuous, we are of opinion that Birkenhead ought to be represented. There is a part of Staffordshire which we think deserves and requires the consideration of this House. It is that district called "the black country," where an immense distinctive industry has arisen since the passing of the Reform

Act; and we therefore propose that West Bromwich and Wednesbury shall return a Member to this House. I said that we had allotted only two additional Members to South Lancashire, because we thought that there were two towns in that county whose interests required to be represented in this House, and therefore we recommend that Members should be allotted to Burnley and Staleybridge. That will be five additional borough members. Turning now to the south of England, we find a place in Surrey which ought to be represented—viz., Croydon; and in the county of Kent we propose that a Member should be allotted to Gravesend, a very ancient town with a distinctive character, and in every sense of the word, I think, entitled to a representative. Now, Sir, I will not say we have studied the map of England, we have done more than that: at this moment I declare that if you are to complete the representation of England according to the principle which influences Her Majesty's Ministers—the principle that this House is to represent, not the numerical majority, but the interests of the country—I do not see any other Member required to complete that representation; and I believe that if we have erred, we have erred rather by anticipating the destiny of what I believe will in time be great and thriving communities. Well, Sir, how are these 15 Members to be supplied? That is the question. They are to be supplied in the spirit of the English Constitution. Adopting a policy which has been recognised on previous occasions, and which for two centuries has been adopted by the Sovereigns and Parliaments of England—assuming, in which I hope I am correct, that it is the opinion of this House that its Members ought not to be increased, we must find the means of representing these new interests as means

have been found before under similar circumstances and in the same constitutional spirit. It is sometimes said that there are constituencies in this country so small that it is an indefensible anomaly to permit them to exist. (Hear, hear.) "*Hear, Hear!*" I entirely disagree with the gentleman who cheered me. I do not think that better arguments can be used in favour of a constituency of 1000 than one of 500. I should be very much surprised if the Honorable Gentleman, ingenious as he may be, could urge them. There are, it is true, some constituencies which cannot be defended, if the numerical majority is to govern England; but there are some very small constituencies which may perform a very important part in the representation of the principles upon which the English Constitution is founded, which are still upheld in this House and still revered in this country. I will take an instance. In all those rattling schemes of disfranchisement with which we were favoured during the autumn, when every gentleman thought that he could sit down at his table and reconstruct the venerable fabric of the English Constitution, if there was one point more than another on which those Utopian meddlers agreed, if there was one enemy which they were all determined and resolved to hunt down, it was the borough of Arundel. There every vice of the system seemed to be congregated; a small population, a small constituency, absolute nomination. Well now, Sir, that is very well for autumnal agitation, but let us see how it practically works in the ancient and famous society of which it is our pride and privilege to be Members. There are 900,000 Roman Catholics in England, scattered and dispersed in every town and county—of course a minority. What means have they

of being represented in this House, especially in the present, as I deem it, unfortunate state of feeling in England with regard to our Roman Catholic fellow subjects? There is one English Roman Catholic Member of Parliament who bears a name that will always be honoured by England and by Englishmen; and practically, and in the spirit of the English Constitution, the 900,000 Roman Catholics of England, men of ancient lineage and vast possessions, whose feelings all must respect, even if they do not agree with them in every particular, find a representative in the borough of Arundel. That is the practical working of our Constitution. You talk of the small number of the constituency of Arundel, 900,000 Roman Catholics! Why, it is more than the West Riding of Yorkshire; it is double the Tower Hamlets. Therefore, Sir, we are not to say because a constituency is small that it is the source from which we must inevitably draw the constitutional means of completing the representation of England. The House will do me the justice of observing that by the measure which, on the part of the Government, I have placed before them to night, whatever arrangements may be made with existing boroughs to find means of effecting the representation of interests not represented, without increasing the numbers of this House, no man will be disfranchised. By adopting this principle of identity of suffrage, even if a man loses the Member who has represented his borough, he may still go to the poll or send his voting-paper; and, under all circumstances, that is a compensation which was never offered in previous schemes of parliamentary reform. We do not feel it our duty to recommend to Parliament that any borough represented by a single Member, like Arundel, should lose that Member. We want, in order

to complete the representation of the country, 15 seats in the House. To procure those seats we must fix upon some rule that must necessarily be arbitrary. The only condition that the House has a right to make, and which all should be glad to concede, is that that rule should be fairly applied. In the last census, if you throw your eye over its parliamentary results, you will find that there are 15 boroughs represented by two Members each, and the population of which is under 6,000. Only 15 boroughs! It will be an admirable opportunity for a display of patriotism—an opportunity seldom offered by the occasions and circumstances of society—to the Members of those places. I have no personal feelings on this subject. I do most sincerely and ardently hope that when there is a New Parliament we may all meet again; but if these 15 boroughs now represented by two Members each, though with a population under 6,000, would consent, without our using force to compel them, to make this concession, we shall complete the representation of the country according to the principles that I believe to be those upon which our representation ought to rest. Therefore, Sir, in the Bill which will shortly be in the hands of Members, there are provisions that the 15 boroughs in question shall, in the next Parliament, be represented by only one Member each.

(Cries of "Name, name.")

The House will, I am sure, consider my feelings. I shall take care every gentleman, I hope to-morrow morning, will receive the schedule containing the names of those boroughs, but I see no necessity, while I think it would be invidious, to mention them now.

(Cries of "Name"—"No, no"—"Name.")

I regret to be compelled to introduce a question which

may become of a personal character, but as the House insists upon it, I suppose I must read the names of the boroughs which, at present represented by two Members, are in future to return only one each. They are:

Honiton	Wells	Andover
Thetford	Richmond	Knaresborough
Totnes	Marlborough	Tewkesbury
Harwich	Leominster	Maldon
Evesham	Ludlow	Lymington.

I have now, Sir, touched upon all those topics which it was my duty to lay before the House this evening. I have omitted many things which I ought to have said, and I have no doubt I may have said some things that I ought to have omitted. Such errors are inevitable in treating so large and so various a theme, but I am sure the House will remember that there will be so many opportunities for me to enter into necessary explanations, and will treat an occasion like the present with generous forbearance. Having described as clearly as I could the principal provisions of our Bill, I shall say no more. I believe that this is a measure wise, prudent and adequate to the occasion. I earnestly hope the House may adopt it. I believe it to be a conservative measure, using that epithet in no limited or partial sense, but in the highest and holiest interpretation of which it is capable. I can say sincerely that those who framed this measure are men who reverence the past, who are proud of the present, and who are confident of the future. Such as it is, I now submit it for the consideration of the House of Commons, convinced that they will deal with it as becomes the representatives of a wise and understanding people.

[After a debate on the first reading, in which Lords PALMERSTON and J. RUSSELL, Messrs. NEWDEGATE, H. DRUMMOND, and J. BRIGHT took part, Mr. DISRAELI replied as follows:]

On the introduction of a Bill, the duties of reply are generally confined to answering the inquiries which may be made in the course of the discussion. In the first place, I was asked what the intentions of the Government were with respect to the four seats still in reserve, arising from the disfranchisement of Sudbury and St. Albans. Sir, the intention of the Government in respect to those seats is that they should still remain vacant, and probably in the course of the discussion of the Bill before the House an opportunity will be given for deliberating on the best mode of apportioning them. The Honorable Member for Sussex asked me whether the Government could give any estimate of the reduction of the constituency by transferring the borough freeholders from the county. There is a return—in fact, I believe, two returns—on the table of the house on that subject, and the number has been already stated accurately by another Member of the House in the course of the debate. I believe the last return is 105,000. The same Honorable Gentleman asked me whether the forty shilling freeholder will vote in the borough in which he resides. He will vote for the borough in which he resides, if his forty shilling qualification is within that borough.

[Mr. DODSON: But supposing he is not a resident in the borough in which his forty shilling qualification lies?]

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: He will then have the advantage, if he does not wish to go to the poll, of voting by means of the polling papers to which I have alluded. I am asked, also, if it is our intention

that the occupier of a £10 house and a forty shilling freehold is to have only one vote. Sir, it is intended that he should have only one vote, and I think one vote ought to satisfy the ambition of anybody who wishes to share in the representation of the place in which he lives. Another Honorable Gentleman asks me whether I can give him any calculation of the number of voters who will be added to the constituencies by the different schemes I have introduced to-night. It would be impossible to give any estimate of that kind which could be depended upon. All I can say is, that the increase will be very considerable—exceeding, I have no hesitation to say, 500,000; but the suffrage will depend so much upon a man's own energy—so many will, I think, be animated by the avenues which would be open for the attainment of the suffrage—that it would be impossible to give the dry statistical account which could be furnished if it depended merely upon property, occupation, and rating qualifications alone, and which could easily enough be ascertained by returns. Then the Honorable Member for Hull inquires of me whether the cost of polling-places for boroughs was also to be defrayed by the locality as well as those for the counties. In this Bill it will be found that the cost of polling-places for boroughs will not be so defrayed, for public rooms can there be easily obtained. We do not propose that the candidates should be freed from that expense; it is, we think, a legitimate expenditure; and I think that the Honorable Member who paid £400 for his polling-places at the last election for Hull, requires the election auditor to examine his accounts with more severity. The Honorable Member for Cambridge inquires of me whether by the £10 qualification of the counties, I mean only the qualification which arises from the possession of a house. The Bill

mentions the qualification which arises from the occupation of lands and tenements.

The Noble Lord the Member for London has not hesitated a moment in expressing his opinion on this Bill. He has two objections to it which at once decide him on the subject. The Noble Lord had the advantage of being acquainted with this Bill before the contents were detailed to the House to-night. He must have become acquainted with them through the corrupt agency which the Honorable Member for Birmingham alluded to. I witnessed the publication of that information with dismay, and I should have thought that the Honorable Member for Birmingham and the Noble Lord would have acquitted me of anything of that kind, for anything more suicidal on my part I really cannot conceive. The Noble Lord based his opposition on two grand principles. First, he cannot consent to the disfranchisement of the ancient freeholders—the freeholders of estates of 300 or 400 years' duration. I have looked into this subject, and I am sorry to say that the great majority of freeholders are not of that ancient duration; they are of more modern date, and have been created in a much more simple and manufacturing style than the Noble Lord seems to contemplate. "But," says the Noble Lord, "I will never be a party to a Bill to disfranchise the hard-working man." What was the first feature in his last Bill, which was not carried? was it not proposed to disfranchise all the freemen of the City? So much for this great and perilous innovation which the Noble Lord dreads, the great and perilous innovation of restricting borough freeholders to voting in the locality where their qualifications exist. It was part of the first Reform Bill advocated by Lord Althorp, then the leader of this House, and I remember that the Honorable

Member for Northamptonshire called the attention of the House last year to the circumstance. Lord Althorp was in favour of the freeholders of boroughs, who resided in boroughs, voting where their qualifications existed. The Noble Lord says he is for mixing up the county and borough franchise, and I am in favour of blending those interests. What we have done for the working classes may not sound so large as some opinions which were propagated before for their entertainment. There is nothing more easy than to make a speech and say you are in favour of the working classes, and that you think that the working classes ought to have this power and that privilege, but then you never have brought forward any measure to do anything for the working classes. The working classes will be sensible of the advantage to be obtained from this measure, which I trust and believe will be passed. There are two avenues to political power open to all working men, the savings-bank suffrage and the forty shilling freehold suffrage. The Honorable Gentleman opposite tells me that I know nothing of the working classes, and arrogates to himself the peculiar privilege of being acquainted with their wants, wishes, and requirements. He says that I know nothing of the working classes, and that my friends behind me know nothing of them. My friends know much more of them than the Honorable Gentleman thinks. I tell him that I have as good means as he has of knowing what are the feelings of the working classes. I will tell him what I have heard from the best authority upon that matter—themselves. There were two things they impressed on me; first, that what they valued most was the savings-bank suffrage, and secondly, that they had the least confidence in the propositions of the Honorable Member for Birmingham. They told me that they

could not fix the Honorable Member in any way, and that they were not satisfied, if his schemes passed, whether the working men would exercise the suffrage or not. But what they could clearly understand was the savings-bank suffrage; they would have taken a much greater measure of power, but this is a great plan, and will be much prized by the working classes of this country.

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

IN RELATION TO

THE REFORM QUESTION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MONDAY, APRIL 4, 1859.

[The Reform Bill of LORD DERBY having been rejected by the House of Commons, the Government determined to appeal to the Country. In announcing that intention, Mr. DISRAELI spoke, with reference to the question of reform, as follows:]

THERE is the Conservative view of the question, and there is, not to use the epithet offensively in the slightest degree, the revolutionary view of the question—that is to say, there is that Conservative view which, in any change that it recommends, would wish to preserve and maintain the present character of the House of Commons as the representation of the various classes of the country, and there is that revolutionary view which would attempt to change its character, and make the House of Commons represent merely the voices of the numerical majority. Reserving to ourselves, under all circumstances, our right to deal with that question, we feel that at present we have fulfilled our pledge to the House and to the country, at great personal and party sacrifices, and we are not prepared to enter into a specific engagement upon the subject.

Sir, our position has been a painful one, and we before this have had to reconsider whether it was not our duty to make a communication to the House; but we have refrained from doing so for three reasons. In the first place, notwithstanding the array opposite, and the power of the various leaders by whom those opposing forces are marshalled against us, we could not see that there was any principle of cohesion in their ranks, or any unity of policy or purpose more evident than when, in consequence of the distracted state of the Liberal party, Lord Derby was summoned by Her Majesty to place himself at the head of affairs. Under these circumstances we felt that we were bound, as men of honor, not lightly to relinquish a post to which we had acceded in the spirit of the Constitution, and which we had knowingly accepted, with all the conditions to which I have alluded. In the second place, the state of foreign affairs is very critical. Her Majesty, under our advice, consented to become the mediator between two great military monarchies, so as, if possible, to prevent a war occurring in Europe; it was, therefore, highly expedient that there should be no change of Ministry, and that Her Majesty's Government should have, as far as it possibly could at that moment, the general confidence of Parliament. Sir, there was a third reason which induced us to take this course. After the frequent promises and procrastinations which have taken place on this subject of Parliamentary Reform, remembering that for ten years it had been acknowledged in this House that the subject ought to be entered into; after the triple pledge given by this House, after the triple promises of successive Ministries, it did seem to us that it would be a very heavy blow to the character of public men in Parliament if we, in

our turn, seemed to evade the engagement which we had made and the requirements of the country in that respect. I remembered that this House had pledged itself to give a calm and patient consideration to this question, and I even thought we might succeed in our general endeavours—at all events, that a beneficial, an honest, and an earnest, even if an unsuccessful measure, ought to be brought forward by Her Majesty's Government. Influenced by these three powerful considerations, we retained our seats on these benches under circumstances which I admit involve a degree of mortification, and we were induced to do so by the feeling that we were doing our duty to the people. The vote, however, at which the House arrived on Thursday has rendered it impossible for us to remain any longer quiescent. That was a vote of censure on the Government, and it was intended as a vote of censure. It was acknowledged as such by its principal supporters, and was accepted as such by Her Majesty's Ministers. The House having arrived at that conclusion, we felt that the Government of the Queen was deprived of all authority.

Under these circumstances, seeing that there is no party of Honorable Gentlemen opposite of whom it may be certainly stated that they have the ability to form an Administration, supposing we had felt it necessary to retire from the administration of affairs; seeing that the Opposition consists of a number of sections which, no doubt, can at any time combine to overwhelm the Queen's Government, whoever may form it; seeing that in the present state of affairs there is no security, but almost every certainty that the like consequences may occur again; believing that this is a state of affairs prejudicial to the reputation of Parliament, and inju-

rious to the best interests of the empire; believing that it is of the utmost importance that at this moment the authority of the Government should be supported by the authority of Parliament, and not being conscious that during the time we have exercised power we have done anything to forfeit the good opinion of our fellow-countrymen, we have thought it our duty to advise Her Majesty to exercise her prerogative, and to dissolve the present Parliament—recurring to the sense of her people in a state of affairs in which embarrassment prevails, and giving the opportunity of establishing a state of things more conducive to the public interests of the country. Under these circumstances, Sir, it is my duty to inform the House that, as soon as the urgent requirements of the public service are satisfied, this Parliament will be prorogued, with a view to its immediate dissolution. There are some votes that must be taken; there are some Acts which must be concluded; there are some measures before us which concern the finances of India, which must under all circumstances be attended to. The other measures of the Government I shall not, of course, presume to further, unless the House express a desire that the Superannuation Bill should pass, but I leave that entirely to the consideration of the House. Sir, I have now stated to the House the course which Her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty to advise Her Majesty to adopt, and which Her Majesty has adopted and sanctioned; and, Sir, I will only, on the part of myself and my colleagues, express the sincere and even solemn hope that whatever may be the consequences of this appeal upon our personal position, it will at least be conducive to the convenience of Her Majesty, to the honor of Parliament, and to the best interests of the country.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MARCH 19TH, 1860.

[In 1860 LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S Reform Bill was introduced to the House without success. Mr. DISRAELI, in the course of the debate upon it, spoke as follows :]

Sir, I understand that the promoters of this Bill claim for it the merit of simplicity. Simplicity in the operations of nature is admirable, because there we see adequate means adapted to the end proposed, without complexity; but in matters of legislation simplicity is a quality of an ambiguous character, because if we find that adequate means are not adapted to the end proposed, then it is not simplicity at which we arrive, but rather imperfection and incompleteness.

Now, what is the end proposed by this Bill? The end is, "to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales." Are the means adequate to that end? My first impression, when I take up this Bill, is that it might have been drawn up four or five centuries ago. Except the land on which we tread, and masses of brick and mortar, I do not see any property referred to as a qualification for exercising the franchise, and that in a country where for more than a century the

people have been doing nothing but creating and accumulating various properties to an incalculable amount. The claims of intelligence. of acquirements, and education, are not noticed. The Bill, indeed, is of a mediæval character, but without any of the inspiration of the feudal system or any of the genius of the middle ages. It proposes to itself three principal objects, which I suppose I may consider three principles. It is to extend the suffrage in counties and in boroughs, and to effect some redistribution of Parliamentary seats. These certainly are objects well worthy the attention of the House; but there are objects almost as important, connected with the exercise of the franchise, and with the better representation of the people of England and Wales, which, singular to say, are not alluded to in this Bill.

It has been thought that; besides extending the possession of the franchise, it was one of our first duties to consider whether, by a more perfect registration, and by affording greater facilities for polling, the exercise of the suffrage might not be rendered far more valuable and far more advantageous to the community. I may remind the House, that in the Bill which I had the honor to introduce to the notice of the late House of Commons there was a proposition, carried into effect by numerous clauses, to establish a self-acting registry. There was a scheme, perfectly worked out, which would have so multiplied polling-places that the Ministers of that day felt justified in asking the House to declare that the payment of travelling expenses to a voter should thereafter be illegal—a provision which would greatly have checked that corruption of which we all so much complain. But in this Bill to amend the representation of the people, so limited are its conception and

the objects of which it treats, I do not see any allusion to those primary and absolutely necessary topics.

The general aspect of the bill is highly unsatisfactory. Its omissions are its principal features. The qualifications from which it draws its franchises are of a limited character, and some important topics connected with the exercise of the suffrage are entirely omitted. That is the general aspect of the Bill; let us now consider it in some detail.

The Bill has three principles. Let me first touch upon the arrangements which are proposed with reference to the borough franchise, and for this reason, that in the somewhat meagre statement with which Her Majesty's Ministers introduced this measure, that was the only part of the Bill with regard to which they laid down any principle of action; and, therefore, there we have an opportunity of ascertaining to a certain degree the principle upon which the Government has acted in that reconstruction of the constituency which is one of the principal objects of this measure.

Now, Sir, when, upon another occasion, I laid down on the part of my colleagues the principle on which we had acted in reconstructing the constituency of this country, I ventured to observe that our sole object had been to confer the franchise upon all those persons to whom we thought that high privilege might safely be entrusted, and who would, we believed, exercise it for the general welfare of the country, and therefore I said, that in making the propositions which I then laid before the House we had not considered what number of persons they would enfranchise. The point which we placed before us was the fitness of the recipients. We did not embarrass ourselves with calculations or alarms as to the number who might receive

the suffrage, so long as we were persuaded that those upon whom it was to be conferred would be classes who would accept it as a high privilege, and to whom it might safely be entrusted. That is not the principle upon which Her Majesty's Ministers have proceeded in framing this measure. On the contrary, the Noble Lord, laying down the principle upon which he has acted, said that he had to consider what would be the number added to the constituency of the boroughs by the different methods which were under his consideration. He said, "If I had taken a rating of £9, I should only have got so many. If it had been £8, it would have given me so many more, but I don't think enough, and I have therefore for boroughs fixed upon a particular figure, which will give some 257,000 votes. I think that is enough, and I do not think the House will be of opinion that it is too much." I object to that principle. In proposing to confer the franchise upon those who do not now possess it, we ought to look to their fitness; we ought not to consider how we can obtain a certain number of additional votes, and then ask the House to support our measure because the number is one which may not alarm them. I say that, if instead of 257,000 there had been 557,000 men who, in the opinion of the House, were fit to receive the suffrage, the suffrage ought to have been given to them; and at the same time I assert, that the fact that the number to be enfranchised is only half, is no proof at all that the class proposed to be admitted to the franchise by this measure is one upon whom the suffrage ought to be conferred. I do not give any opinion on the policy of the proposition before us; but it appears to me, that the founding a recommendation to extend the franchise merely upon a consideration of numbers is

a very unsafe and shallow proceeding. What is the addition which the Noble Lord is about to make to the borough constituencies? Here are his figures. The present constituencies of the cities and boroughs of England and Wales may be placed at 440,000, including freemen, and the Noble Lord makes a proposition by which they shall be increased to 658,000. Let us consider what is the character of the present constituencies, and then let us see what is the character of the addition which is to be made to them. There is no fallacy so great as to suppose that, because a man is registered and votes under a £10 household qualification, he therefore lives in a £10 house. Reflection and observation, especially after the debates of the last twelve months, have impressed that pretty generally upon the conviction of society. In the existing body of 410,000 housekeepers—I deduct the freemen—all classes almost in Her Majesty's dominions are included, from the patrician resident who, perhaps, pays a rent of £1,000 a-year for his dwelling, to the weaver and the dock labourer of the Tower Hamlets, who exercise the franchise under the lowest degree of qualification. But between Grosvenor Square and the Tower Hamlets, or rather between the classes which they represent, there is scarcely any class in England that is not included in the existing borough constituencies. All the mercantile class, all the professional class, all the various classes of retail dealers—classes of different political opinions, of different religious opinions, of different habits, of different social standing—at present exercise the franchise in cities and boroughs. To these 410,000 persons, whose feelings, whose position, whose opinions, whose habits are all so varying and so contrary, the Noble Lord, under this Bill, proposes to add 248,000, who are all from the

same class, and whose opinions, feelings, and habits are identical. Let us consider what will be the effect upon our present constituent body, with its various elements, of the introduction of a class so purely homogeneous. It may be said that, raising the constituent body, considering the question only numerically, from 440,000 to 658,000 is not a very great experiment; that it is, as the Noble Lord has told us, an increase of only one-third. But it appears to me that if we accept that calculation, we shall embrace a fallacy which, in calmly considering this subject, will greatly mislead us. What we have to consider is what will be the probable effect of the proposed extension of the franchise upon the present borough constituencies? As it happens that the proposed new electors will produce what, generally speaking, may be described as no effect whatever upon the present metropolitan constituencies, and as, of course, they will produce no effect upon the constituencies of the universities, we must deduct the amount of those constituencies from the existing constituent body before we can attempt to estimate what will be the effect of the new body upon the old one. If we deduct 145,000 electors, which is the amount of the metropolitan constituencies and the constituencies of the universities, from the existing constituent body, we shall find that the number of the remaining voters is only 288,000; making a deduction of 20 per cent from the addition which the Noble Lord proposes, there will remain 203,000; and, therefore, we have to consider what will be the effect upon the present constituent body of 288,000 of a homogeneous class of 203,000 coming into competition with it at public elections. But even that mode of putting the question, which is an accurate and a true one, will hardly convey

a complete idea to the House of the manner in which the new electors must necessarily act upon our cities and boroughs, because, to ascertain what will be the effect of 203,000 voters, all of one class, bound together by the same sentiments and the same habits, upon 288,000 animated by different opinions, influenced by different feelings, and regulated by different habits, we must recollect that, as appears by the returns which the Government have placed before us, in six boroughs—and those among the most important in the country—the constituency is trebled, in 28 it is doubled, and in 48 the addition is equal to at least one-half of the present electoral body. It results, therefore, that about half of the boroughs of England and Wales will, as far as we can form any calculations, be under the influence of the new class of voters. I give no opinion at present upon the policy of the measure: my only object is to put before the House what is the real state of the facts, and what may be the probable results of the proposed extension of the franchise. Let us now consider, whether the particular class upon whom the Noble Lord is about to confer this great political power are a class who are incapable or who are unlikely to exercise it. Are they a class who have shown no inclination to combine? Are they a class incapable of organisation? Quite the reverse. If we look to the history of this country during the present century, we shall find that the aristocracy, or upper classes, have on several very startling occasions shown a great power of organisation. I think it cannot be denied that the working classes, especially since the peace in 1815, have shown a remarkable talent for organisation, and a power of discipline and combination inferior to none. The same, I believe, can-

not be said of the middle classes. With the exception of the Anti-Corn Law League I cannot recall at this moment any great successful political organisation of the middle classes; and, living in an age when everything is known, we now know that that great confederation, which ultimately proved so triumphant, owed its success to a great and unforeseen calamity, and was on the eve of dispersion and dissolution only a short time before that terrible event occurred. [An ironical cheer from Mr. BRIGHT.] I can only say that my authority is one of the most eminent members of your own confederation. But the fortune of the League does not affect my argument, which is founded on the fact that the working classes have shown on various occasions, and for long continuous periods, powers of organisation, discipline, and combination quite equal to those of the upper classes; but that the middle classes, with the exception of the Anti-Corn Law League, have not, in my memory, conducted any great political confederation to a successful issue. Then the class to which you are about to give this predominance is perfectly capable of organisation; and from the days of the Luddites to the present period, the tradition of frequently secret, but always well-disciplined, organisation has been preserved among the working classes. It is said that the working classes are exceedingly intelligent and educated, and therefore likely to appreciate the possession of the franchise. I do not deny their intelligence or their information, but there are reasons why you should take care in legislating on this subject that you do not give them a predominance. What has been the object of our legislative labours for many years past, but to put an end to a class legislation which was very much complained of? But you are now pro-

posing to establish a class legislation of a kind which may well be viewed with apprehension.

It is highly necessary, in dealing with this subject, and in attempting to confer the franchise on the working classes, that you should not establish by that means a class legislation with which, considering its power and probable consequences, no class legislation that has hitherto, though only partially, prevailed can for a moment be compared. It was obvious policy that, while you attempted to introduce the working classes to the exercise of the franchise, you should counteract the tendency to this class domination by giving a variety of franchises, and by effecting a natural counterpoise to consequences which all must deprecate. This was attempted in the Bill brought forward last year, and how were the propositions contained in that measure met? They were called "fancy franchises," and that was considered an answer. Alliteration tickles the ear, and is a very popular form of language. It is, I believe, the characteristic of rude and barbarous poetry; but it is not an argument in legislation. I thought it a remarkable circumstance, after hearing so much of the objection to "fancy franchises," that the present Bill was not a fortnight on the table of the House, before I found distinguished Liberals rising in every quarter on the opposite benches, and proposing the introduction of what they denounced last year as "fancy franchises." Let us see what you mean by "fancy franchises." We never had an opportunity of arguing the question last year, because the Bill was not allowed to go into Committee. I will take a "fancy franchise"—a franchise dependent on the partial occupation of a house, and which is popularly called the "lodger franchise." Honorable Gentlemen speak of the lodger franchise as if

lodging were a casual circumstance in our social life; that it might be as well as not to give a lodger the franchise; that he was very likely to be a respectable man, but that, after all, it was not a matter of very great importance. Now, lodging is not an accident of our social life: it is a condition of our social life. The richer the country gets, and the greater is its trade, the more numerous will become the lodger class. Just as the retail trade takes every year larger dimensions, the shopkeeper must have a larger shop, with a house disproportioned to his social wants, either as a magazine for his stores, or as a means of exhibiting his goods. The larger the shop the more disproportioned is the house to his social wants; and so just as the country increases in wealth and trade, the shopkeeper will feel the necessity of filling his ample and commodious chambers; and in that way the lodger class comes into existence, with ample or sufficient means, and with all the habits that make men respectable in this country. They are educated, they feel a sense of responsibility in the performance of public duties. When you give a vote to the mere householders, surely those who really occupy the house, and are infinitely more wealthy, and frequently much better educated, ought not to be debarred from a trust of which they are worthy. What is the use of calling it a "fancy franchise?" It is not a "fancy franchise," but a real franchise—as real as, and more likely to be worthily exercised than, the householders' franchise, which, according to a limited and barbarous notion, you consider the only proper franchise.

The payment of direct taxes might well be a basis of the suffrage. You are now in this country substituting, in a great degree, direct taxation for indirect taxation.

The careful and limited substitution of direct for indirect taxation, which has gone on now for some years, is a matter no doubt of the utmost importance, and highly advantageous to the country, but it is a system which, if pursued without great prudence and caution, would make the finance minister who proposed it the Necker of this country. It is a process connected with great consequences, and at a moment when you not only propose to confer the franchise, but predominant power, on a class that does not pay direct taxation, I hardly know any qualification which could be more properly recommended than a suffrage based on the payment of direct taxation. It will be answered, though momentous consequences may depend on a class enfranchised on this basis, it is a mere "fancy franchise"—but it is unnecessary to pursue the subject further, because every one must feel what a silly and unmeaning phrase that is.

I have placed before the House some critical remarks with respect to the borough franchise. I think the Noble Lord made a mistake in founding his proposition on a mere consideration of numbers. I think the Noble Lord ought to have considered, in the first place, fitness, and not numbers. Following this principle, this appears to be the consequence, that the Noble Lord is about to introduce a body homogeneous in character and interests of upwards of 200,000 into our boroughs, in addition to what is really not more, so far as the question of their influence is concerned, than a body of about 288,000. Then, in one-half of the boroughs in England the new constituency will be able to command the seats, and by so doing you are changing the depositary of political power to a very great extent, and are, in fact, conferring power on a class which your recent legislation during the last ten years has endeavoured in every way to avoid.

I cannot, therefore, approve this mode of increasing the suffrage in boroughs. I do not think this proposition ought to have been brought forward, unless accompanied by means through which the elements of the constituency should be more various in character, and unless a counterpoise to the predominance of any particular class were established. I know it may be said that the result of the last election was favorable to the introduction of the working classes into the constituency by the mode of reducing the franchise. It is difficult to say what was the result of the last general election. That is a matter of very considerable doubt; but there is no doubt that the Noble Lord took a prudent course when he took a prompt one, and called for the opinion of Parliament at the moment of its meeting. What might have been the opinion of Parliament, after sitting a few months longer, I leave the House to judge. The opinion of the country on this question of admitting the working classes to the suffrage was given in no decided but rather in a hesitating manner; and I think the opinion of the country was this, that it was desirable that a certain portion of the working classes—those who by their skill and conduct had proved themselves worthy of the elcctoral privilege—should be admitted into the constituency under certain conditions, which would guard the community from the predominance of a class. That, I believe, was the real verdict of the country.

But it is a mistake to suppose that the working classes at this moment have no share in the representation. I must consider the freemen of England as part of the working classes, though they are always treated with such contempt by some Honorable Gentlemen. Moreover, the result has shown that in the metropolis the great body of the working classes are in possession of

the franchise; and that they also possess the franchise in many of the most important northern boroughs, no one questions. I don't suppose that you can estimate the share of the working classes in the representation at less than one-ninth or one-eighth even of the existing constituencies. But when Honorable Gentlemen lay it down as a principle that the working classes ought to enjoy the franchise, we must remember that working men are not confined to towns alone, and that there are others who also have a fair right to consideration. The superior class of rural labourers and of working men in the country, if you look at their knowledge of their pursuits, their general conduct, and the great skill which is required in their daily duties, need not shrink from a comparison with the workmen of the towns. If you are to recognize the claims of skilled mechanics, you must equally take into consideration the claims of English woodmen, English shepherds, English gardeners, and some of the higher class of labourers in husbandry. It is impossible to deal with the question in a general way, and, therefore, you necessarily have to make a selection of the working classes, in order that their voice and influence may be heard. It follows that you must have limitation, that you must have qualification; and I say that the only effect of the Noble Lord's Bill will be to give a predominance, in half the boroughs of England, to a class who, if they act in conformity with their antecedents, will evince decision, combination, discipline, and will probably return to this House a body of men who will exercise a great and, perhaps, a controlling influence over the government of the country. Now, are you prepared to sanction such a course? Is it a course to be justified—I will not say on the principles of political expediency,

but—on the principles of political justice? I contend that it is not, and therefore I cannot agree that the method by which the Noble Lord proposes to admit the influence of the working classes in the election of Members, of Parliament is a wise and well-considered one. I think he ought to have increased the borough constituencies by various means, and not merely by this perilous monotony of process; and while he might have introduced the most skilled mechanics among the working classes into the constituency, he might have done it under conditions which would not have neutralised the voice of all the various classes comprised in the present borough constituencies.

I proceed now to consider the next principle on which this Bill is founded—namely, the reduction of the county franchise. I, for one, have never opposed the creation in all the counties of this country of a large and ample constituency. Believing that the influence of the land is most beneficial for the preservation of our constitutional liberties, I have been always anxious that the great landed proprietors in this House should come here supported by the voice of a numerous constituency, and should be at the head, not merely of their tenantry, but of their neighbours. I have always felt that that would add to their influence and power, which are of the utmost advantage to the State. But, in increasing the county constituencies, one condition should be observed. The persons thus enfranchised should be fairly connected with the chief property and the chief industry of the county. A constituency is not connected with the chief property and industry of the county if, for example, the suffrage is possessed by some non-parliamentary borough which may be a new community developing itself by means of some special

interest of its own, or some decaying borough which has a share in the county representation by virtue of an old vested right, but which exercises the franchise without any sympathy with the property and the industry of the county. I don't think that the condition I have just laid down is observed when the inhabitants of a great borough, teeming with a population which has overpassed the old parliamentary limits affixed to the town in 1832, but connected with that borough by every tie and duty, social and political, are permitted to send out their hordes of electors, who ought to have voted for the borough of which they really form a part, to elect a County Member having no sympathy with their local interests and feelings. I don't think that great condition is observed when, at any time, but especially at a time when you are establishing the franchises of England more and more upon occupation, you allow freeholds in towns to become the great manufactories of split votes, by which, at a general election, bands of voters are enabled to pour forth and elect Members of Parliament for a district with which they have no local sympathy and no common interests. In the Bill I do not find any means adopted by which that great injustice can be rectified. The Noble Lord, though his measure is a small one, should really descend to these details. For example, I find that clause 4 will effect disfranchisement on a large scale, by enacting that the occupation of a building jointly with land is not to confer a right of voting, unless the building be of £5 annual value. That clause is a new one, and would disfranchise a large number of voters in the rural districts. The Noble Lord has a terror of disfranchisement, which he opposed in the Bill submitted by me, while proposing it in every measure of his own, but

when simplicity is the order of the day, the Noble Lord, though he will not establish a just franchise in the counties, adopts a sweeping measure of disfranchisement, applying only to rural voters.

The county franchise, as proposed in the Bill, will greatly reduce the influence of the landed proprietors and of the landed interest in this country. I object to any such reduction, and I will tell the Honorable Member, who seems alarmed or annoyed by that expression, why it is I object. I look round upon Europe at the present moment, and I see no country of any importance in which political liberty can be said to exist. I attribute the creation and the maintenance of our liberties to the influence of the land and to the tenure of land. In England there are large properties round which men can rally, and that, in my mind, forms the only security in an old European country against the centralised form of government which has prevailed and must prevail in every European community where there is no such counterpoise. It is the tenure of land to which we are indebted for our public liberties, because it is the tenure of land which makes local self-government a fact in England, and which allows the great body of Englishmen to be ruled by traditional influence and by habit, instead of being governed, as in other countries, by mere police. Well, Sir, believing that the proposed reconstruction of the county franchise has a tendency to diminish the just and salutary influence of the land of this country, I highly object to the Noble Lord's plan.

Now, the third principle upon which this measure is founded is the redistribution of parliamentary seats. Let us see whether the application of that principle be a just and wise one. There are two schools of opinion

upon this subject; there is the school of politicians who would entirely reconstruct the borough system of England, and who would not only entirely reconstruct it, but I may say would entirely subvert it. They are of opinion that what is to be obtained by public parliamentary election in this country is a declaration of the opinion of the mere numerical majority of the population in the country, and they would subvert the present system and reconstruct it on a scale which would obtain that result. That is what I call the American system, and it works exceedingly well in America. Its population every year is immensely increasing, its resources in its illimitable territory are sufficient to support that population, and, therefore, when their Legislative Assembly, or Parliament, is elected on principles of numerical majority, they have a first-rate assembly founded on that principle. But that would not apply to England. If we take a mere numerical majority as the test of the representative system, we are very inferior to many countries in our population, and if we had a representative assembly elected on that principle, all we should have would be a third-rate assembly.

The other school of politicians is of course of opinion that population is an element in representation. Nobody would be so absurd as to deny that. It is an element just the same as property is; but in a very ancient country, highly civilised, with a very complicated social organisation, you are bound to represent all the interests of that country, which are essentially local interests, and all the traditions and prescriptions of that country, which are the sources of our powerful social organisation. If you have a representative assembly elected on this principle you will, inasmuch as you have

in England the most powerful social organisation in the world, have a first-rate representative body composing the House of Commons. These are the two schools which exist. No one pretends that the borough system was invented to obtain these results, but it is a system which in this country secures that description of representation, and it is cherished and preserved because an ancient machinery has been found existing which produces that result.

I can quite understand the scheme of the Honorable Member for Birmingham and his friends, which so startled the country a year ago, because they act consistently on the American principle. But those who act on the English principle must be ruled by different considerations, and must propose different ends. All they conclude in the redistribution of seats is this—when they find in the periodical revision of the representation of the country that new and powerful interests have arisen not duly represented, then, following the example of their predecessors—not merely parliamentary precedent, but the precedents of our sovereigns in the exercise, of their prerogative—they confer upon these new interests a political representation, and inasmuch as it is the custom of this country, now long settled, that the number of this assembly is not to be increased, they say that the mildest course which they can take is to deprive existing boroughs in some degree of their representation; and therefore it was a sound principle which the late Government adopted last year for meeting these wants, when they proposed that some of the least important boroughs of the country should contribute their fair share of the means by which that result should be obtained. So far as he has followed that example, I approve of the course which the Noble Lord has taken;

but the Noble Lord has carried the point too far, or not far enough. If he is of the opinion of those who think that the borough system is indefensible, he should have made a great advance, but if his principle is the English principle, and he believes that there are no grounds on which you can even partially disfranchise a borough which enjoys the privilege of returning Members to this House, then I think that the Noble Lord has gone too far. The Noble Lord ought to have made enfranchisement precede disfranchisement. There are some boroughs in the north of England whose claims to representation could not be denied. But it is not consistent with the spirit of our Constitution to enfranchise boroughs in the north of England without enfranchising others in the south, because we should study the distribution of power throughout the whole country. There are one or two counties where the representation is ludicrously inadequate; for there are large interests of a different and contrary character. There are immense districts in the West Riding, extending over seventy miles, whose interests—the agricultural—were different to those of another portion of the same county, where manufacturing industry is teeming, and it is advisable therefore that the interests which are not adequately represented should be called into this House. The Noble Lord, however, goes past that.

I object to his system on two grounds. First of all I think he is acting on a complete fallacy in establishing what I venture to call cumulative Members for places already represented. Now I want to know from the Government on what principle they have so acted. You do not act on that principle in the electoral body. If a man has £100,000 a year he has only one vote, and on very good grounds, for you know that although the

man has a large fortune, and you give him the same vote as the humblest dweller in a £10 tenement, he has an indirect influence in the community which asserts itself and sufficiently protects his property. Why should you do that for Manchester and Birmingham which you do not do for the wealthy individual? Honorable Gentlemen are sent here to represent the opinion of places, and not the power of places. Does anybody suppose that if the interests of Manchester were assailed, they would only be defended by the two respectable representatives who sit in this House for that borough? Not at all. We know that there would be scores and scores of Members, not confined to one side of the House, who would support the interests of Manchester; and, therefore, I entirely disapprove of this principle, which appears to be perfectly unconstitutional, and which would change the character of this House; because, if representation is to be meted out according to the population and property, you would soon have very few places indeed represented in this House, and representation would be confined entirely to the large manufacturing and commercial cities and large counties.

I admit that, in the Reform Bill of 1832, you did confer on some counties a third Member. But the circumstances under which that was done could not be drawn into precedent, and if it were one, as I shall be told perhaps, it would be a very bad one. In the Reform Bill of 1832, it was necessary to increase the County Members. There were some counties in which you exceeded the number of voters which authorised the conferring of two Members, and yet which did not reach that number which permitted division, and this plan of having a third Member was consequently had recourse to. But some of those counties we now know

have reached an amount of population which authorises division, and it would be better, if you wish to increase the county representation, to divide those counties, than to have recourse to this system of cumulative Members, which cannot be defended, and which is entirely opposed to the spirit of the Constitution.

But there is another ground on which I think it is equally objectionable. It appears it is the happy practice of the Constitution, that almost every class and every interest, and every great institution is represented; and though it is the happy lot under our Constitution that in that sense the minority may be represented, still I think that there can be no doubt that when a constituent body is formed, the majority ought to decide, and the minority, in that sense, ought to have no claim. It is the custom of the country, and that is a very strong reason; but beyond that, the principle is based upon all our constitutional precedents and practice, and it appears to me to be a principle which can also be upheld on the soundest and wisest political reasons, even abstractedly. The Noble Lord, in 1854, proposed that the minority should be directly represented in this House. In my opinion, a more unconstitutional course could not have been suggested, for there is only one way by which the minority of a constituent body can be represented, and that is, by becoming a majority. That is the only way by which it ought to be. The Noble Lord has now proposed, not directly, but indirectly, to secure a representation to the minority in several places, in some cities and some counties. I entirely object to that; but it is done, although indirectly, in this Bill, and there are some counties and some towns to which a third Member is added on that principle. We have complained of late years of a want of distinct parties,

and of distinct principles in this House. So far as I can learn, that is a want which will in a very short time disappear. I think we shall soon have distinct parties and distinct principles on all sides; but if anything could be devised which would introduce into this House a timid and temporising spirit, it is the political and parliamentary machinery that recognises the representation of the minority of a constituent body in Parliament. A want of conviction and a want of energy and spirit in public life would be the consequence, and, therefore, I entirely disagree with the second object, which the Noble Lord wishes to obtain by thus dealing with the redistribution of seats. It appears to me, that the principle of the redistribution of seats, as the Noble Lord applies it, is perfectly unsound; that it can satisfy none of those opposed to the English element of parliamentary life. It cannot satisfy those who want to reconstruct the House of Commons on the American principle, while at the same time, it fatally alters the only sound principles upon which the disfranchisement of boroughs ought to be permitted—namely, that of conferring a representation on interests not already represented. Now I have adverted particularly to those principles of his Bill.

What is the course we ought to take with respect to the measure? That is the question. It is a very bad measure. That, I think, is the universal opinion. In fact, I believe I do not know more than two individuals whom it perfectly satisfies—namely, the Noble Lord the Foreign Secretary and the Member for Birmingham; and this I must say, the Member for Birmingham, with that candid audacity which in his case greatly neutralises the pernicious opinions he expresses, and the dangerous course which he pursues, has already told us

that no sooner shall this Bill have passed into a law than he is prepared to agitate the country in order to obtain a more extensive measure. But, then, if we reject the second reading of this Bill, we know we shall be told by the Noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs that we are against all parliamentary reform, and that we are opposed to the extension of the franchise—an object which, when we occupied a responsible position, we ourselves introduced a Bill to effect. Now, I may be allowed to assure the Noble Lord that I am not against the extension of the franchise. On the contrary, I am of opinion that, if you deal with this subject at all, the franchise may be extended in a manner which would be likely upon the whole to prove beneficial to the country. I believe, moreover, so far as I can form an estimate from documents in my possession, that under the Bill of 1859 the franchise would have been more widely extended than it will under the operation of the measure which we are now discussing. I am not, therefore, I repeat, opposed to an extension of the franchise; I am not against the redistribution—if seats are to be redistributed—in accordance with the constitutional principle which would give a representative to those interests which are not at present adequately represented in the House of Commons. I am willing to enter into the consideration of the question whether the constituencies in boroughs and counties might not be increased in a manner which would tend to strengthen the Constitution itself; and I think the means and materials are in existence by which the commercial, the manufacturing, and the working classes of the country residing in towns might be accorded increased power in this respect, and thus acquire that due weight and influence which is so important to the proper working of

our constitutional system, while the landed interest should at the same time be fairly and adequately represented. Therefore, so far as the principle of this Bill is concerned, I am not prepared to say that I should vote for its rejection on the second reading, although I am strongly of opinion that that principle has in this instance been most unskilfully applied. We shall, however, have an opportunity of considering the Bill in Committee; and what course does it then become us to take? We must, of course, duly weigh the responsibility that attaches to those who meddle with a question of this great interest, and, therefore, I do not feel called upon now to intimate what may be done by me after Easter, when the Bill goes into Committee; indeed, I am not quite sure that I shall then propose anything myself with respect to it. I do not feel quite certain that the responsibility of the measure, considering the circumstances under which it has been introduced, may not very fairly be allowed to rest upon the shoulders of the Noble Lord opposite, and his colleagues.

Were I to take a merely limited view of the probable operation of the Bill, I do not think I need, so far as the great Conservative party is concerned, look upon it with any very great alarm. I do not believe that the 100 boroughs in England which are to be handed over to one class, whose interests, whose opinions, and whose habits are identical, are represented, generally speaking, by the Members of the Conservative party. The operation of the Bill may be, indeed, to deprive this House of a vast number of gentlemen who now adorn it and give to it weight and respectability, and whose loss, although they do not sit on those benches, I should regard as a great national calamity. That, I say, may be the

operation of the Bill, and I, for one, should be very sorry that that should turn out to be the case, for I have no desire to see the great influence and authority of the Whig party in the State curtailed or destroyed; for I think it has hitherto afforded one of the best securities for our public liberty and for the good government of the country that, when a change in the disposition of political power happened to take place, the administration of her affairs was committed to the hands of a party which, upon whatever side of the House its Members might sit, was prepared to exercise the authority with which it was confided upon English and not upon American principles. It has hitherto been more than probable that when such changes as those to which I allude occurred power would be entrusted to the hands of men who respected the traditions of the nation, and who would be faithful to its prescriptive fame. Therefore it is that I greatly deplore to see so serious a blow as I fear this Bill may inflict upon the interests of the Whig party dealt by a hand from which twenty years ago I little thought it was to be anticipated. I shall not, however, oppose, as I said before, the second reading of the Bill; and I shall be curious to know, when it goes into Committee, what propositions will be made by Honorable Gentlemen opposite—for some of them seem desirous to introduce into it amendments—with the view of rendering it not injurious to the State.

It has been always said of English statesmen that they have been more remarkable for their caution than for their patience, and I am not at all surprised that that should be the case, for man is rather of an active than of a contemplative character. It is the privilege of most men who possess considerable abilities to be active in matters of detail, but the power of prediction

is granted but to few. For my own part, I think it has upon the whole been better for England that the public opinion of her people has been in advance of her public men, and that it is better her Government should blunder—for Governments, like individuals, do occasionally blunder—by adhering to an old-established system, than by inventing a new system which has never been tried. I admit that, with reference to this question of parliamentary reform, English statesmen have been much to blame. There is no doubt that, from the period when the Duke of Wellington was at the head of affairs, and for two or three years previously, warnings were given to our leading public men, which were unhappily disregarded, and opportunities have in consequence been lost which, if they had been turned to account, might have been productive of great advantage to mankind.

Well, Sir, when the Noble Lord re-opened this question, he did re-open it from a sincere and, as he thought, a sound feeling. The House knows its history from that time. The Noble Lord has more or less been in power for these ten years. He has kept this question perfectly in hand, till when we were in power, it had become a weapon always ready to be drawn from the armoury of politics, and brandished against any Conservative Ministry that might occupy the benches opposite. The time had then come, in our opinion, when the question could have been terminated, and we endeavoured to terminate it on conditions which, I think, are spoken of now by the country in a more kindly manner than when they were first introduced, and which, if they had been accomplished, would, as I think, have strengthened the Constitution. But, Sir, I believe the Noble Lord was premature in the measure which he introduced ten years ago, and

that those who have followed him are equally in a certain degree to blame. Our course was in self-defence, and because it was impossible to carry on the Government, from the manner in which that measure was left, if we were not prepared to deal with it. Sir, I do not wish to escape from my share of blame. But, then, it may be said, in excuse of the Noble Lord and of his successors and colleagues, that the time was opportune, if changes were ultimately to be carried, to anticipate political necessity. The country was tranquil; the country was prosperous; there was a prospect of foreign tranquillity as well as of domestic contentment. What is your condition now? Is it the same? Is the state of affairs the same as when the Noble Lord and his successors endeavoured to deal with this question? A great military nation, matchless in valour, with a public organisation more complete than any that has existed since the days of ancient Rome, abounding in resources of men, money, and military material, and so enamoured of glory that it has freely bartered freedom for fame, no longer conceals her thirst for general empire. As far as Europe is concerned, the prospect is much more dangerous than in the days of the Great Monarch; for in the days of Louis XIV. Europe was full of military energy; Europe now is prostrate and spiritless. As far as England is concerned, the prospect is infinitely more dangerous than in the days of the French Republic and the old French Empire; for France was then our implacable foe; France is now our unswerving friend. France then menaced our hearths; France now decorates our citizens. France harassed our trade then by a continual blockade; France now facilitates commercial intercourse by treaties of amity. There is nothing to keep the English people watchful or

awake. Superior to rapine, hardly condescending to force, France is building up a colossal despotism by all the arts of the most advanced liberalism—by universal suffrage—by secret voting—by electoral districts. Will you never be warned? Is this the time and the condition of affairs when you should attempt feebly, but in the same vein, to imitate these political schemes? Is this the time when you should still further deviate from that old, that free, and that aristocratic constitution which has formed the empire of England and framed the liberties of Englishmen?

Sir, I must say that is not my opinion. The Noble Lord the Secretary of State, since the night when he entered into the fatal pledge on this side of the House which has placed his Government in consequence in a position of great embarrassment, has been called upon to preside over an office of the State very different from that which he then contemplated. The Noble Lord is in receipt every day of information which may well make him look grave, and the perusal of which cannot but teach him that it is a great thing for a Minister that he can fall back upon the ancient institutions of a country which have proved its power to stem any storm.

Well, Sir, that being the case, I will not relinquish the hope that, before we are summoned to go into Committee, a relieved House of Commons and a grateful people will learn from the Noble Lord that this unnecessary, this uncalled-for, and this mischievous measure has been withdrawn.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S REFORM BILL OF 1860.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MONDAY, JUNE 11TH, 1860.

SIR, Her Majesty's Government, I think, have taken a wise and not an undignified course. Under the circumstances in which the House finds itself with regard to the progress of public business, it is much better, in my opinion, that the Government should at once have made up their minds to the course they were to adopt, rather than allow this Bill to go into Committee, to waste more time without any probability of coming to a satisfactory result, and to prevent what I think we shall now find will happen—namely, that they will be able to carry on the business of the House with great effect and great unanimity on both sides.

I should not have wished to touch for a moment on the Bill which is now about to be withdrawn, but that the Noble Lord made an allusion which I hardly like to pass without comment. The Noble Lord, in referring —as is his custom on these occasions—to the pedigree of progress, seemed to intimate that on this side of the House there could be no authentic claim to assist in it. But I beg the Noble Lord and the House to recollect that if this Bill is withdrawn it is not from any success-

ful opposition, or from opposition of any kind, which has been offered to the *bonâ fide* amendment of the representation of the people. The Bill has not succeeded, because, unfortunately, the Government was encumbered with a great mass of public business of a character that rendered it utterly impossible, with any support, to have carried a bill of this kind through the House. As complaints have been made on both sides of the House of the causes of delay, I may be permitted to observe that the real cause of it is, in fact, that the Government had undertaken other questions of such importance and such magnitude, and encumbered by such details, that it was physically and morally impossible to have carried the Bill it has now wisely withdrawn. In the course of our debates, imputations are sometimes made on both sides of the House without sufficient grounds; but I am satisfied that what I have now said describes the true state of the case. The Government has withdrawn the Bill because it is impossible to carry on the urgent business of the country with that measure still under our notice. The delays and impediments to the Bill have arisen from the Government having other engagements that rendered progress with the measure impossible. I do not mean now to discuss the policy of the measure; it is not the time for going into such a discussion.

But the Noble Lord has referred to the general principle of the Reform Bill; he has laid down the necessity of the working classes being admitted, to a certain degree, to the representation. I would remind the Noble Lord that this has not been the question in controversy; the question has been as to the means and measure of effecting that object. As far as I can read public opinion, and watch the progress of the intellectual

examination of the question, I think, before the House is again called on to consider it, more satisfactory modes of effecting the object will be discovered than the coarse and vulgar expedient of the degradation of the franchise. I would therefore state, on the part of Honorable Gentlemen on this side of the House, why we receive with perfect approbation—and with no wish to conceal it—the course the Government has taken with regard to the measure. The Government has acted quite honorably towards this House—has been influenced by a sincere desire for the public welfare and the public service; and it will receive from us every assistance and aid in the prosecution of the public business that is now so urgent, and to which the Noble Lord has sacrificed objects that, no doubt, were dear, and honorably dear, to him.

I would sit down, did I not feel it my duty to ask the House to consider for a moment a personal question. If it concerned myself only, I would not take this opportunity of alluding to it; but it concerns also another Member of this House, and affects the relations that exist between the House and the individual who for the time may be responsible for the conduct of its business. The Honorable Member for Birmingham, the other night, stated that after the last general election I entered into a compact with some Honorable Gentlemen on the other side of the House, by which I engaged to introduce a Bill for the Reform of Parliament, including a £10 franchise for counties and a £6 franchise for the boroughs. This statement was circulated very often, like other statements that I did not think it necessary particularly to notice. As the Honorable Member for Birmingham was about to found an argument upon it, I thought I

would take the liberty, as much for his convenience as my own, of informing him that he was under a complete misapprehension. The Honorable Member he referred to more particularly was the Member for Sunderland,* who was not then present, and that Honorable Gentleman is under the impression that I stated I had had no communication with him. Now, I should be glad to remove a wrong impression from the mind of any Honorable Gentleman, and as this is probably the last evening on which we shall talk about Parliamentary Reform, I will for two or three minutes touch on this topic. When I had the honor of leading the business of this House, I considered it a duty to hold my time at the service of any gentleman who might wish to see me in reference to that public business, or to what might concern his constituents. Many gentlemen now on the opposite benches have communicated with me on those subjects, and I trust I have always given them every attention and assistance in my power. Among others I had an interview with the Honorable Member for Sunderland on a subject of great importance. At that time the war between France and Austria had commenced, and the subject on which the Honorable Gentleman asked for the interview was connected with the Italian War. It so happened that at the time he was with me there was a newspaper on the table containing an announcement that a vote of want of confidence in the Government was about to be proposed, on the ground that it was going to throw over the question of Reform. The Honorable Member for Sunderland, during our conversation, called my notice to this paragraph—which I had already observed—and said he did not think

* Mr. Lindsay.

a vote of want of confidence could be carried in the House, as there were many Members who did not agree with it. It was not a confidential interview, but involved just that degree of discretion required to be observed to prevent conversations on business from degenerating into gossip; I spoke as I should have spoken to any Honorable Member I met in the lobby, and in that spirit which I hope will always exist in this House, and render it, not in theory only, but in reality, an assembly of gentlemen. I said it would be very absurd if a vote of want of confidence was proposed unless the Government immediately brought in a Reform Bill; that the Government did not intend to do so immediately, but neither did it mean to throw over the question of reform. On a subsequent occasion the Honorable Member for Sunderland told me there was a feeling of dissatisfaction among some Members of the House, and that if I could assure him the Government did not intend to throw over the question, but to introduce a *bonâ fide* measure on the subject, it would have a very good effect on public opinion. I told him it was quite impossible any Minister could state in private what would be the policy of the Government, and that that policy would be stated by the Members of the Government in their places in Parliament. I also told him it was impossible the Government could propose any Reform Bill in that session, but that, nevertheless, it did not intend to throw over the question; and before the vote of want of confidence was proposed I took it for granted the Government would state publicly what its policy would be, and that no one would be able to pretend he was ignorant of it. What took place was no more than what occurs every day. The conduct of the Honorable Mem-

ber for Sunderland was perfectly parliamentary, honorable, and straightforward; but, as some misapprehension has existed with regard to it, I have taken this opportunity of alluding to it. I take it for granted the House concurs with me in feeling that it is not desirable to curb or check in any way that frank communication which ought to be permitted to subsist between the Leader of the House and its Members generally, on whatever side they may sit. I have now placed fairly and frankly before you the real state of the case, and I think Honorable Members will be of opinion that the course which I took in the matter I was justified in adopting, and that no imputation rests on the Honorable Gentleman to whom I allude for the share which he has had in the transaction.

THE BOROUGH FRANCHISE EXTENSION BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MAY 8TH, 1865.

[The following speech is the last in a protracted and adjourned debate on the above Bill as introduced by Mr. BAINES. The House divided on the "previous question" with the following result:

Ayes	214
Noes	288
Majority .	74

The motion for the second reading was consequently not put.]

SIR, I could have wished, and once I almost believed, that it was not necessary for me to take part in this debate. I look on this discussion as the natural epilogue of the Parliament of 1859; we remember the prologue. I consider this to be a controversy between the educated section of the Liberal party and that section of the Liberal party, according to their companions and colleagues, not entitled to an epithet so euphuistic and complimentary. But after the speech of the Minister, I hardly think it would become me, representing the opinions of the gentlemen with whom I am acting on this side of the House, entirely to be silent.

We have a measure before us to-night which is to increase the franchise in boroughs. Without

reference to any other circumstances I object to that measure. I object to it because an increase of the franchise in boroughs is a proposal to redistribute political power in the country. I do not think political power in the country ought to be treated partially; from the very nature of things it is impossible, if there is to be a redistribution of political power, that you can only regard the suffrage as it affects one section of the constituent body. Whatever the proposition of the Honorable Gentleman, whether abstractedly it may be expedient or not, this is quite clear, that it must be considered not only in relation to the particular persons with whom it will deal, but to other persons with whom it does not deal, though it would affect them. And therefore it has always been quite clear that if you deal with the subject called Parliamentary Reform you must deal with it comprehensively. The arrangements you may make with reference to one part of the community may not be objectionable in themselves, but may be extremely objectionable if you consider them with reference to other parts. Consequently it has been held—and the more we consider the subject the more true and just appears to be the conclusion—that if you deal with the matter you must deal with it comprehensively. You must not only consider borough constituencies, you must consider county constituencies; and when persons rise up and urge their claims to be introduced into the constituent body, even if you think there is a plausible claim substantiated on their part, you are bound in policy and justice to consider also the claims of other bodies not in possession of the franchise, but whose right to consideration may be equally great. And so clear is it when you come to the distribution of power that you must consider the subject

in all its bearings, that even Honorable Gentlemen who have taken part in this debate have not been able to avoid the question of what they call the redistribution of seats—a very important part of the distribution of power. It is easy for the Honorable Member for Liskeard, for example, to rise and say, in supporting this measure for the increase of the borough franchise, that it is impossible any longer to conceal the anomalies of our system in regard to the distribution of seats. "Is it not monstrous," he asks, "that Calne, with 173 voters, should return a Member, while Glasgow returns only two, with a constituency of 20,000?" Well, it may be equally monstrous that Liskeard should return one Member, and that Birkenhead should only make a similar return. The distribution of seats, as any one must know who has ever considered the subject deeply and with a sense of responsibility towards the country, is one of the most profound and difficult questions that can be brought before the House. It is all very well to treat it in an easy, off-hand manner; but how are you to reconcile the case of North Cheshire, of North Durham, of West Kent, and many other counties, where you find four or six great towns, with a population, perhaps, of 100,000, returning six Members to this House, while the rest of the population of the county, though equal in amount, returns only two Members? How are you to meet the case of the West Riding in reference to its boroughs, or the case of the representation of South Lancashire in reference to its boroughs? Why, those are more anomalous than the case of Calne. Then there is the question of Scotland. With a population hardly equal to that of the metropolis, and with wealth greatly inferior—probably not more than two-thirds of the amount—Scotland yet possesses

forty-eight Members, while the metropolis has only twenty. Do you Reformers mean to say that you are prepared to disfranchise Scotland, or that you are going to develope the representation of the metropolis in proportion to its population and property; and so allow a country like England, so devoted to local government and so influenced by local feeling, to be governed by London? And, therefore, when those speeches are made which gain a cheer for the moment, and are supposed to be so unanswerable as arguments in favour of parliamentary change, I would recommend the House to recollect that this as a question is one of the most difficult, and one of the deepest that can possibly engage the attention of the country.

The fact is this—in the representation of this country you do not depend on population or on property merely, or on both conjoined; you have to see that there is something besides population and property—you have to take care that the country itself is represented. That is one reason why I am opposed to the second reading of the Bill.

There is another objection which I have to this Bill brought forward by the Honorable Member for Leeds, and that is, that it is brought forward by the Member for Leeds. I do not consider this a subject which ought to be intrusted to the care and guidance of any independent Member in this House. If there be one subject more than another that deserves the consideration and demands the responsibility of the Government, it certainly is the reconstruction of our parliamentary system; and it is the Government or the political party candidates for power, who recommend a policy, and who will not shrink from the responsibility of carrying that policy into effect if the opportunity be

afforded to them, who alone are qualified to deal with a question of this importance.

But, Sir, I shall be told, as we have been told in a previous portion of the adjourned debate, that the two great parties of the State cannot be trusted to deal with this question, because they have both trifled with it. That is a charge which has been made repeatedly during this discussion and on previous occasions, and certainly a graver one could not be made in this House.

I am not prepared to admit that even our opponents have trifled with this question. We have had a very animated account by the Right Honorable Gentleman who has just addressed us as to what may be called the Story of the Reform Measures. It was animated, but it was not accurate. Mine will be accurate, though I fear it will not be animated. I am not prepared to believe that English statesmen, though they be opposed to me in politics, and may sit on opposite benches, could ever have intended to trifle with this question. I think that possibly they may have made great mistakes in the course which they took; they may have miscalculated, they may have been misled; but I do not believe that any men in this country, occupying the posts, the eminent posts, of those who have recommended any reconstruction of our Parliamentary system in modern days, could have advised a course which they disapproved. They may have thought it perilous, they may have thought it difficult, but though they may have been misled, I am convinced they must have felt that it was necessary.

Let me say a word in favour of one with whom I have had no political connection, and to whom I have been placed in constant opposition in this

House when he was an honoured Member of it—I mean Lord Russell. I cannot at all agree with the lively narrative of the Right Honorable Gentleman, according to which Parliamentary Reform was but the creature of Lord John Russell, whose Cabinet, controlled by him with the vigour of a Richelieu, at all times disapproved his course; still less can I acknowledge that merely to amuse himself, or in a moment of difficulty to excite some popular sympathy, Lord John Russell was a statesman, always with Reform in his pocket, ready to produce it and make a display. How different from that astute and sagacious statesman now at the head of Her Majesty's Government, whom I almost hoped to have seen in his place this evening. I am sure that it would have given the House great pleasure to have seen him here, and the House itself would have assumed a good-humoured appearance. I certainly did hope that the Noble Lord would have been enabled to be in his place and prepared to support his policy. According to the animated but not quite accurate account of the Right Honorable Gentleman who has just sat down, all that Lord Derby did was to sanction the humour and caprice of Lord John Russell. It is true that Lord John Russell, when Prime Minister, recommended that Her Majesty in the Speech from the Throne should call the attention of Parliament to the expediency of noticing the condition of our representative system; but Lord John Russell unfortunately shortly afterwards retired from his eminent position.

He was succeeded by one of the most considerable statesmen of our days, a statesman not connected with the political school of Lord John Russell, who was called to power not only with the assistance of Lord

John Russell and the leading members of the Whig party, but supported by the whole staff of eminent statesmen who had been educated in the same school and under the same distinguished master. This eminent statesman, however, is entirely forgotten. The Right Honorable Gentleman overlooks the fact that Lord Aberdeen, when Prime Minister, and when all the principal places in his Cabinet were filled with the disciples of Sir Robert Peel, did think it his duty to recommend the same counsel to Her Majesty. But this is an important, and not the only important, item in the history of the Reform Bill which has been ignored by the Right Honorable Gentleman.

The time, however, came when Lord Aberdeen gave place to another statesman, who has been complimented on his sagacity in evading the subject, as if such a course would be a subject for congratulation. Let me vindicate the policy of Lord Palmerston in his absence. He did not evade the question. Lord Palmerston followed the example of Lord John Russell. He followed the example also of Lord Aberdeen, and recommended Her Majesty to notice the subject in the Speech from the Throne. What becomes, then, of the lively narrative of the Right Honorable Gentleman, and what becomes of the inference and conclusions which he drew from it? Not only is his account inaccurate, but it is injurious, as I take it, to the course of sound policy and the honour of public men.

Well, now, you have three Prime Ministers bringing forward the question of Parliamentary Reform; you have Lord John Russell, Lord Aberdeen, and you have even that statesman who, according to the account of

the Right Honorable Gentleman, was so eminent for his sagacity in evading the subject altogether.

Now, let me ask the House to consider the position of Lord Derby when he was called to power, a position which you cannot rightly understand if you accept as correct the fallacious statements of the Right Honorable Gentleman. I will give the House an account of this subject, the accuracy of which I believe neither side will impugn. It may not possibly be without interest, and will not, I am sure, be without significance. Lord Derby was sent for by Her Majesty—an unwilling candidate for office, for let me remind the House that at that moment there was an adverse majority of 140 in the House of Commons, and I therefore do not think that Lord Derby was open to any imputation in hesitating to accept political responsibility under such circumstances. Lord Derby laid these considerations before Her Majesty. I speak, of course, with reserve. I say nothing now which I have not said before on the discussion of political subjects in this House. But when a Government comes in on Reform and remains in power six years without passing any measure of the kind, it is possible that these circumstances too may be lost sight of. Lord Derby advised Her Majesty not to form a Government under his influence, because there existed so large a majority against him in the House of Commons, and because this question of Reform was placed in such a position that it was impossible to deal with it as he should wish. But it should be remembered that Lord Derby was a member of the famous Cabinet which carried the Reform Bill in 1832. Lord Derby, as Lord Stanley, was in the House of Commons one of the most efficient promoters of the measure. Lord Derby believed that

the Bill had tended to effect the purpose for which it was designed, and although no man superior to prejudices could fail to see that some who were entitled to the exercise of the franchise were still debarred from the privilege, yet he could not also fail to perceive the danger which would arise from our tampering with the franchise. On these grounds Lord Derby declined the honour which Her Majesty desired to confer upon him, but the appeal was repeated. Under these circumstances it would have been impossible for any English statesman longer to hesitate; but I am bound to say that there was no contract or understanding further than that which prevails among men, however different their politics, who love their country and wish to maintain its greatness. I am bound to add that there was an understanding at the time existing among men of weight on both sides of the House that the position in which the Reform question was placed was one embarrassing to the Crown and not creditable to the House, and that any Minister trying his best to deal with it under these circumstances would receive the candid consideration of the House. It was thought, moreover, that a time might possibly arrive when both parties would unite in endeavouring to bring about a solution which would tend to the advantage and benefit of the country.

And yet, says the Right Honorable Gentleman, it was only in 1860 that the portentous truth flashed across the mind of the country—only in 1860, after so many Ministers had been dealing with the question for so many years! All I can say is that this was the question and the only question which engaged the attention of Lord Derby's Cabinet. The question was whether they could secure the franchise

for a certain portion of the working classes, who, by their industry, their intelligence, and their integrity, showed that they were worthy of such a possession, without at the same time overwhelming the rest of the constituency by the numbers of those whom they admitted. That, Sir, was the only question which occupied the attention of the Government of Lord Derby, and yet the Right Honorable Gentleman says that it was in 1860 that the attention of the public was first called to the subject, when, in fact, the question of Parliamentary Reform had been before them for ten years, and on a greater scale than that embraced by the measure under consideration this evening.

I need not remind the House of the reception which Lord Derby's Bill encountered. It is neither my disposition, nor, I am sure, that of any of my colleagues, to complain of the votes of this House on that occasion. Political life must be taken as you find it, and, as far as I am concerned, not a word shall escape me on the subject. But from the speeches made the first night, and from the speech made by the Right Honorable Gentleman this evening, I believe I am right in vindicating the conduct pursued by the party with which I act. I believe that the measure which we brought forward was the only one which has tended to meet the difficulties which beset this question.

Totally irrespective of other modes of dealing with the question, there were two franchises especially proposed on this occasion which, in my mind, would have done much towards solving the difficulty. The first was the franchise founded upon personal property, and the second the franchise founded upon partial occupation. These two franchises, irrespective of other modes by which we attempted to meet the want and the difficulty—these

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two franchises, had they been brought into Committee of this House, would, in my opinion, have been so shaped and adapted that they would have effected those objects which the majority of House desire. We endeavoured in that Bill to make proposals which were in the genius of the English Constitution. We did not consider the Constitution a mere phrase. We knew that the Constitution of this country is a monarchy tempered by co-ordinate estates of the realm. We knew that the House of Commons is an estate of the realm; we knew that the estates of the realm form a political body, invested with political power for the Government of the country and for the public good; yet we thought that it was a body founded upon privilege and not upon right. It is therefore in the noblest and properest sense of the word an aristocratic body, and from that characteristic the Reform Bill of 1832 did not derogate; and if at this moment we could contrive, as we did in 1859, to add considerably to the number of the constituent body, we should not change that characteristic, but it would still remain founded upon an aristocratic principle.

Well, now the Secretary of State has addressed us to-night in a very remarkable speech. He also takes up the history of Reform, and, before I touch upon some of the features of that speech, it is my duty to refer to the statements which he made with regard to the policy which the Government of Lord Derby was prepared to assume after the General Election. By a total misrepresentation of the character of the Amendment proposed by Lord John Russell, which threw the Government of 1858 into a minority, and by quoting a passage from a very long speech of mine in 1859, the Right Honorable Gentleman most dexterously conveyed

these two propositions to the House—first, that Lord John Russell had proposed an Amendment to our Reform Bill, by which the House declared that no Bill could be satisfactory by which the working classes were not admitted to the franchise—one of our main objects being that the working classes should in a great measure be admitted to the franchise; and, secondly, that after the elections I was prepared, as the organ of the Government, to give up all the schemes by which those franchises founded upon personal property, partial occupation, and other grounds, and to substitute a Bill lowering the borough qualification. That conveyed to the House a totally inaccurate idea of the Amendment of Lord J. Russell. There was not a single word in that Amendment about the working classes. There was not a single phrase upon which that issue was raised, nor could it have been raised, because our Bill, whether it could have effected the object or not, was a Bill which proposed greatly to enfranchise the working classes. And as regards the statement I made, it simply was this. The election was over—we were still menaced, but we, still acting according to our sense of duty, recommended in the Royal Speech that the question of a reform in Parliament should be dealt with; because I must be allowed to remind the House that whatever may have been our errors, we proposed a Bill which we intended to carry. And having once taken up the question as a matter of duty, no doubt greatly influenced by what we considered the unhappy mistakes of our predecessors, and the difficult position in which they had placed Parliament and the country, we determined not to leave the question until it had been settled. But although still menaced, we felt it to be our duty to recommend to Her Majesty to introduce the question of Reform when

the Parliament of 1859 met; and how were we, except in that spirit of compromise which is the principal characteristic of our political system, how could we introduce a Reform Bill after that election, without in some degree considering the possibility of lowering the borough franchise? But it was not a franchise of £6;—it was an arrangement that was to be taken with the rest of the Bill, and if it had been met in the same spirit we might have retained our places.

But, says the Right Honorable Gentleman, pursuing his history of the Reform question, when the Government of Lord Derby retired from office, "we came in, and we were perfectly sincere in our intentions to carry a Reform Bill; but we experienced such opposition, and never was there such opposition. There was the Right Honorable Gentleman," meaning myself, "he absolutely allowed our Bill to be read a second time." That tremendous, reckless opposition of the Right Honorable Gentleman, which allowed the Bill to be read a second time, seems to have laid the Government prostrate. If he had succeeded in throwing out the Bill, the Right Honorable Gentleman and his friends would have been relieved from great embarrassment. But the Bill having been read a second time, the Government were quite overcome, and it appears they never have recovered the paralysis up to this time. The Right Honorable Gentleman was good enough to say that the proposition of his Government was rather coldly received upon his side of the House, but he said "nobody spoke against it." Nobody spoke against the Bill on this side, but I remember some most remarkable speeches from the Right Honorable Gentleman's friends. There was the great city of Edinburgh represented by acute eloquence of which we never weary, and which again upon

the present occasion we have heard, there was the great city of Bristol, represented on that occasion among the opponents, and many other constituencies of equal importance. But the most remarkable speech, which "killed Cock Robin," was absolutely delivered by one who might be described as almost a member of the Government—the Chairman of Ways and Means, who, I believe, spoke from immediately behind the Prime Minister. Did the Government express any disapprobation of such conduct? They have promoted him to a great post, and have sent him to India with an income of fabulous amount. And now they are astonished they cannot carry a Reform Bill. If they remove all those among their supporters who oppose such Bills by preferring them to posts of great confidence and great lucre, how can they suppose that they will ever carry one?

Looking at the policy of the Government, I am not at all astonished at the speech which the Right Honorable Gentleman the Secretary of State has made this evening. Of which speech I may observe, that although it was remarkable for many things, yet there were two conclusions at which the Right Honorable Gentleman arrived. First, the repudiation of the rights of man, and, next, the repudiation of the £6 franchise.

The first is a great relief, and, remembering what the feeling of the House was only a year ago, when, by the dangerous but fascinating eloquence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we were led to believe that the days of Tom Paine had returned, and that Rousseau was to be rivalled by a new social contract, it must be a great relief to every respectable man here to find that not only are we not to have the rights of man, but we are not even to have the 1862 franchise. It is a matter, I

think, of great congratulation, and I am ready to give credit to the Secretary of State for the honesty with which he has expressed himself, and I only wish we had had the same frankness,—the same honesty we always have,—arising from a clear view of his subject, in the first year of the Parliament as we have had in the last.

I will follow the example of the Right Honorable Gentleman and his friends. I have not changed my opinions upon the subject of what is called Parliamentary Reform. All that has occurred—all that I have observed—all the results of my reflections, lead me to this more and more: that the principles upon which the constituencies of this country should be increased is one not of radical, but I may say of lateral reform—the extension of the franchise, not its degradation. And although I do not wish in any way to deny that we were in the most difficult position when the Parliament of 1859 met, and that, being anxious to assist the Crown and the Parliament, by proposing some moderate measure, which men on both sides might support, we did, to a certain extent, agree to some modification of the £10 franchise—to what extent no one knows; yet I may say that it would have been one which would not at all have affected the character of the franchise, such as I and my colleagues wished to maintain. Yet I confess that my opinion is opposed, as it originally was, to any course of the kind. I think that it would fail in its object, that it would not secure the introduction of that particular class which we all desire to introduce, but that it would introduce many others who are totally unworthy of the suffrage. But I think it is possible to increase the electoral body of the country by the introduction of voters upon principles in unison with

the principles of the Constitution, so that the suffrage should remain a privilege, and not a right—a privilege to be gained by virtue, by intelligence, by industry, by integrity, and to be exercised for the common good of the country. I think if you quit that ground—if you once admit that every man has a right to vote whom you cannot prove to be disqualified, you would change the character of the Constitution, and you would change it in a manner which will tend to lower the importance of this country.

Between the scheme we brought forward and the measure brought forward by the Honorable Member for Leeds, and the inevitable conclusion which its principal supporters acknowledge it must lead to, it is a question between an aristocratic Government in the proper sense of the term—that is, a Government by the best men of all classes—and a democracy. I doubt very much whether a democracy is a Government that would suit this country; and it is just as well that the House, when coming to a vote on this question, should really consider, if that be the real issue between retaining the present Constitution—not the present constitutional body, but between the present Constitution and a democracy—it is just as well for the House to recollect that what is at issue is of some price.

You must remember, not to use the word profanely, that we are dealing with a peculiar people. There is no country at the present moment that exists under the circumstances and under the same conditions as the people of this realm. You have, for example, an ancient, powerful, richly-endowed Church, and perfect religious liberty. You have unbroken order and complete freedom. You have estates as large as the Romans; you have a commercial system of enterprise

such as Carthage and Venice united never equalled. And you must remember that this peculiar country with these strong contrasts is governed not by force; it is not governed by standing armies—it is governed by a most singular series of traditionary influences, which successive generations of our countrymen have cherished and preserved, knowing that they embalm customs and represent the law. And with this, what have you done? You have created the greatest empire that has existed in modern times. You have amassed a capital of fabulous amount. You have devised and sustained a system of credit still more marvellous, and, above all, you have established and maintained a scheme of labour and industry so vast and complicated, that the history of the world offers no parallel to it. And all these mighty creations are out of all proportion to the essential and indigenous elements and resources of the country. If you destroy that state of society, remember this—England cannot begin again.

There are countries which have been in great peril and gone through great suffering; there are the United States, who in our own immediate day have had great trials; you have had—perhaps even now in the United States of America you have—a protracted and fratricidal civil war which has lasted for four years; but if it lasted for four years more, vast as would be the disaster and desolation, when ended, the United States might begin again, because the United States would only be in the same condition that England was at the end of the war of the Roses,—and probably she had not even 3,000,000 of population,—with vast tracts of virgin soil and mineral treasures, not only undeveloped but undiscovered. Then you have France. France had a real revolution in our days and those of our predecessors—a real revolution,

not merely a political and social revolution. You had the institutions of the country up-rooted, the orders of society abolished—you had even the landmarks and local names removed and erased. But France could begin again. France had the greatest spread of the most exuberant soil in Europe; she had, and always had, a very limited population, living in a most simple manner. France, therefore, could begin again. But England—the England we know, the England we live in, the England of which we are proud—could not begin again. I don't mean to say that, after great troubles, England would become a howling wilderness. No doubt the good sense of the people would to some degree prevail, and some fragments of the national character would survive; but it would not be the old England—the England of power and tradition, of credit and capital, that now exists. That is not in the nature of things, and, under these circumstances, I hope the House will, when the question before us is one impeaching the character of our Constitution, sanction no step that has a preference for democracy, but that they will maintain the ordered state of free England in which we live.

I do not think that in this country generally there is a desire at this moment for any further change in this matter. I think the general opinion of the country on the subject of Parliamentary Reform is that our views are not sufficiently matured on either side. Certainly, so far as I can judge, I cannot refuse the conclusion that such is the condition of Honorable Gentlemen opposite. We all know the paper circulated among us before Parliament met, on which the speech of the Honorable Member for Maidstone commented this evening. I quite sympathise with him; it was one of

the most interesting contributions to our elegiac literature I have heard for some time. But is it in this House only that we find these indications of the want of maturity in our views upon this subject? Our tables are filled at this moment with propositions of eminent members of the Liberal party—men eminent for character or talent, and for both,—and what are these propositions? All devices to counteract the character of the Liberal Reform Bill, to which they are opposed? Therefore, it is quite clear, when we read these propositions and speculations, that the mind and intellect of the party have arrived at no conclusions on the subject. I do not speak of Honorable Gentlemen with disrespect; I treat them with the utmost respect; I am prepared to give them the greatest consideration; but I ask whether these publications are not proofs that the active intelligence of the Liberal party is itself entirely at sea on the subject?

I may say there has been more consistency, more calmness, and consideration on this subject on the part of gentlemen on this side than on the part of those who seem to arrogate to themselves the monopoly of treating this subject. I can, at least, in answer to those who charge us with trifling with the subject, appeal to the recollection of every candid man, and say that we treated it with sincerity—we prepared our measure with care, and submitted it to the House, trusting to its candid consideration—we spared no pains in its preparation; and at this time I am bound to say, speaking for my colleagues, in the main principles on which that Bill was founded—namely, the extension of the franchise, not its degradation—will be found the only solution that will ultimately be accepted by the country. Therefore, I cannot say that I look to this question, or that

those with whom I act look to it, with any embarrassment. We feel we have done our duty; and it is not without some gratification that I have listened to the candid admissions of many Honorable Gentlemen who voted against it, that they feel the defeat of that measure by the Liberal party was a great mistake. So far as we are concerned, I repeat, we, as a party, can look to Parliamentary Reform not as an embarrassing subject; but that is no reason why we should agree to the measure of the Honorable Member for Leeds. It would reflect no credit on the House of Commons. It is a mean device. I give all credit to the Honorable Member for Leeds for his conscientious feeling; but it would be a mockery to take this Bill; from the failures of the Government and the whole of the circumstances that attended it, it is of that character that I think the House will best do its duty to the country, and will meet the constituencies with a better understanding, if they reject the measure by a decided majority.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

THE REFORM BILL OF 1859.

[This Bill, as introduced by Mr. DISRAELI in the House of Commons, Monday, February 28th, 1859, is entitled A Bill to Amend the Laws relating to the Representation of the People in England and Wales, and to facilitate the Registration and Voting of Electors. The following are the provisions of this important measure *in extenso*.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the laws affecting the representation of the people in England and Wales, and to afford increased facilities for the registration and voting of Her Majesty's subjects entitled to vote in the election of Members to serve in Parliament: Be it therefore enacted, by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

I. Every male person of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity, who shall have any one of the several qualifications hereinafter specified, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and to vote in the election of a Member or Members for the county, or if within the limits of a borough, then in the election of a Member or Members for the borough where, in the case of qualifications arising out of lands or tenements, such lands or tenements shall be situate, and where in all other cases such persons shall reside.

The qualifications above referred to are as follow:

1. Who shall be beneficially entitled, as owner or as mortgagee in possession, at law or in equity, to an estate of inheritance in lands or tenements of freehold tenure, of the clear yearly value over and above all charges and encumbrances affecting the same, of not less than 40*s.*

2. Or shall be so beneficially entitled to an estate of inheritance in lands or tenements of copyhold, or any other tenure whatever, except freehold, of such clear yearly value, as aforesaid, of not less than £5.

3. Or shall be so beneficially entitled to an estate for any life or lives in lands or tenements, of any tenure, of such clear yearly value, as aforesaid, of not less than £5.

4. Or shall be so beneficially entitled to a term originally granted for not less than thirty years in lands or tenements, of any tenure, of such yearly value, as aforesaid, of not less than £5.

5. Or shall occupy as tenant any such lands or tenements of the clear yearly value of not less than £10.

6. Or shall occupy any apartments in or portion of a house, whether furnished or unfurnished, for which he shall have paid a rent of not less than 8*s.* per week, or per annum to an amount of £20.

7. Or shall be in the beneficial enjoyment of a yearly income arising from the personal property following, that is to say: From any annuity granted by the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, or any dividends or interest from the parliamentary stocks or funds of the United Kingdom, or from the stocks, shares, or bonds of the East India Company, or of the Bank of England, standing in his own name, of not less amount per annum than £10.

8. Or shall be in the beneficial enjoyment of an income arising from any pension, pay, or superannuation allowance, in respect of any past employment by such person in any department of Her Majesty's naval, military, East Indian, or civil service, and who shall no longer be permanently employed therein, amounting to not less per annum than £20.

9 Or shall hold, and shall be beneficially entitled to, a deposit in some savings bank, established in England or Wales, under the provisions of the Act of the ninth year of his late Majesty King George IV., chapter 92, to the amount of £60.

10. Or shall possess one or other of the qualifications following, that is to say:

Who shall be a graduate of any University of the United Kingdom;

Or an ordained priest or deacon of the Church of England;

Or a minister of any other religious denomination appointed, either alone or with not more than one colleague, to the charge of any chapel or place of worship, and officiating as the minister thereof;

Or a barrister-at-law, or sergeant-at-law, in any of the Inns of Court in England, or a certificated pleader or conveyancer;

Or a certificated attorney, or solicitor, or proctor in England and Wales;

Or a member of the medical profession, registered under the provisions of "The Medical Act, 1858";

Or a schoolmaster holding a certificate from the Committee of Her Majesty's Council on Education.

11. Or who shall be entitled to be registered for any county, city or borough, in respect of any estate for life in freehold lands or tenements, of which he shall be seised at the time of the passing of this Act, or in respect of any qualification, as freeholder, burgage tenant, burgess, freeman, liveryman, or otherwise, reserved or defined in the 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, and 35th sections of the Act of the second year of the reign of His late Majesty King William IV., chapter 45.

II. No person shall be entitled to vote, as aforesaid, unless he shall have been duly registered according to the provisions hereinafter contained; and no person shall be so registered in any year in respect of his estate or interest in any lands or tenements, either of inheritance, or for any life or lives, or for a term of

years, as aforesaid, unless he shall have been in the actual possession thereof, or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof, for his own use, for six calendar months at least next previous to the 24th day of June in such year: Provided always, That where any such qualification shall come to any person at any time within such period of six calendar months, by descent, succession, marriage, marriage settlement, devise, or promotion to any benefice in a church, or by promotion to any office, such person shall be entitled in respect thereof to have his name inserted in the list of voters then next to be made, by virtue of this Act as hereinafter mentioned; and no person shall be so registered in any year in respect of any lands or tenements occupied by him as tenant, or in respect of any apartments or portion of a house occupied by him as aforesaid, unless he shall have been in the actual occupation thereof for twelve calendar months next previous to the 24th day of June in such year; and no person shall be so registered in respect of any annuity or income, as aforesaid, or in respect of a deposit in any savings-bank, as aforesaid, unless he shall have been in the receipt of such annuity or income, or have had such deposit standing in his name, for twelve calendar months next previous to the 24th day of June in such year; and no person shall be so registered in respect of any such annuity, income, or deposit, or in respect of any educational qualification as aforesaid, unless he shall have resided within the county or borough in respect of which he claims to be so registered, for twelve calendar months next previous to the 24th day of June in such year: Provided always, That no person having two or more places of residence shall be entitled to be registered as a voter at more than one place in respect of the same qualification.

III. No person shall be so registered in any year, in respect of his occupation of any lands or tenements situate in a parish or township in which there shall be a rate for the relief of the poor as occupier, unless he shall have been rated, in respect of such premises, to all rates for the relief of the poor made during the time of

his occupation, so required as aforesaid, and shall have paid on or before the 25th day of June in such year all the poor rates which shall have become payable in respect of such lands or tenements previously to the 25th day of December then next preceding.

IV. Every person occupying any lands or tenements in any county or borough shall have the same right to claim to be rated to the relief of the poor as is given by the 30th section of the said Act passed in the second year of the reign of His late Majesty King William IV., and the provisions of the Act passed in the fifteenth year of Her Majesty, chapter 14, shall be applicable to all persons so claiming, except that the 25th day of December and the 24th day of June shall be the periods fixed in lieu of the 5th day of January and the 20th day of July respectively.

V. The lands or tenements in respect of the ownership or occupation of which any person shall be entitled to be registered in any year shall not be required to be the same premises, but may be different premises, owned or occupied in immediate succession by such person during the six calendar months, or twelve calendar months, as the case may be, next previous to the 24th day of June in such year.

VI. Where any such premises shall be jointly owned or occupied by more persons than one, each of such joint owners or occupiers shall be entitled to be so registered, in case the clear yearly value thereof, as aforesaid, shall be sufficient when divided by the number of such owners or occupiers to give to each of such joint owners or occupiers, as the case may be, a sum of not less than the amount before specified, as constituting a qualification to vote, in the case of such owner or occupier, respectively, but not otherwise: Provided always, That no greater number of persons shall be entitled to be registered in respect of any freehold, copyhold, or leasehold interest in the same premises than shall be equal to two voters for every single tenement or undivided plot of land, unless they shall have derived the same by descent, succession, marriage, marriage-settlement, de-

vise, or promotion, as aforesaid, or unless they shall be bonâ fide engaged as partners carrying on trade or business thereon.

VII. All such enactments now in force as require the payment by any person of assessed taxes, in order to entitle such person to have his name inserted in respect of the occupation of any premises in any list of persons entitled to vote for any borough, and so much of any enactments now in force as require assessors or collectors of taxes to deliver to overseers lists of persons who have not paid the assessed taxes payable in respect of any premises, are hereby repealed.

VIII. In order to entitle any person to be placed on any register of voters, in respect of his occupation of apartments in or the portion of any house, such person shall, on or before the 24th day of July in each year, send to the overseers of the parish or township in which such house shall be situate, a claim, according to the form numbered 5, in the Schedule B to this Act annexed, with the declaration therein contained, and signed and witnessed as therein required.

IX. The Governor and Company of the Bank of England, the Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland, the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, and the East India Company, upon the request of any person who, at the time of making such request, shall, for the twelve months next preceding the 24th day of June in any year, have received or have been entitled to receive any annuity, or any dividends, or interest to the amount of £10, in respect of stock, shares, or bonds, standing in the name of such person in the books of such Commissioners or Company respectively, shall cause to be given to such person a certificate in the form numbered 1 in the Schedule A to this Act. And the trustees or managers of any savings bank in England and Wales, upon the request of any person who shall have in such savings bank a sum of not less than £60, and which he shall have had deposited in such bank for the twelve months next preceding the 24th day of June in any year, shall cause to be given to

such person a certificate in the form numbered 2 in the said Schedule A to this Act. And every such certificate shall have a distinguishing number affixed thereto, and shall on all occasions touching the right or title of such person to be registered be received as primâ facie evidence of the facts therein mentioned, without proof of the signature or of the official character of the person appearing to have signed the same.

X. In order to entitle any person to be registered in respect of his yearly income derived from such personal property as aforesaid, or in respect of his being a depositor in any savings bank, such person shall, on or before the 24th day of July, send in a claim, with the certificate before mentioned annexed, to the overseers of the parish in which he shall reside, in the form numbered 6 in the Schedule B to this Act, with the declaration therein contained; and the overseer of the parish shall, on or immediately after the 24th day of June in every subsequent year, so long as the person so registered shall continue on the register, send to the commissioners, company or savings bank giving such certificate, addressed to the secretary, a circular in the form numbered 3 in the said Schedule B, and shall omit the name of such person from the list of voters for the current year, unless it shall appear from the answer received to such circular that the person so registered continues to be possessed of such qualification: Provided always, That any person who shall continue to be possessed of the same qualification for which his name appears on the register then in force, and who shall have been so omitted by the overseers from the list of voters in any year, shall be entitled to claim to be inserted in the supplemental list of voters in the manner hereinafter mentioned.

XI. The circulars to be sent by the overseers as aforesaid shall be transmitted through the post, and the commissioners, or company, or the trustees of the savings bank, respectively, receiving any such circular, shall forthwith authorise some officer or clerk on their behalf to return such circular to the overseers by the

post, with an answer thereto in the form numbered 4 in the Schedule B to this Act.

XII. The overseers shall keep such certificates annexed to the said claims, and also such annual circulars with the answers thereto, and allow the same to be perused by any person without payment of any fee, and give copies of the same in like manner as hereinafter provided with regard to lists of voters and persons objected to; and the said overseers shall produce the said certificates annexed to the original claims, and also such annual circulars and replies to the barrister appointed to revise the lists for any county or borough at the same time as they are by law required to deliver the original claims and notices of objection, and the revising barrister shall return all such certificates and annual circulars, with the answers thereto, to the overseers, who shall forthwith file the same, and keep all such certificates and circulars in some secure place, and shall, at the conclusion of their year of office, deliver the same to their successors in the said office of overseers, who shall, in like manner, preserve and hand over the same to their successors.

XIII. In order to entitle any person to be registered in respect of an income arising from any pension, pay, or superannuation allowance, as aforesaid, or in respect of any one of the educational qualifications hereinbefore mentioned, such person shall, on or before the 24th day of July, send to the overseers of the parish within which he shall reside a claim according to the form numbered 7 in the Schedule B to this Act annexed.

XIV. If any person shall wilfully give or make any such certificate, or answer to such circular, as hereinbefore mentioned, falsely, or without due authority, or forge, counterfeit, or alter any such certificate or answer, or any signature thereto, or shall make use of the same in support of any claim to vote, or tender the same in evidence, knowing the same to be false or counterfeit, or given without due authority, or shall wilfully declare falsely in any claim sent in by him under the provisions of this Act, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and,

on being convicted thereof, shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, together with hard labour.

XV. No person employed in any Government arsenal, dockyard, yard, or factory connected with Her Majesty's army or navy, shall be capable of giving his vote at any election for the county, city, or borough within which such arsenal, dockyard, yard, or factory shall be situate during the time that he shall be so employed, and for one month after he shall have quitted such employment; and the vote of such person, if given, shall be utterly void and of none effect, notwithstanding that the name of such person shall have been inserted in the register in force at the time of such election; and any person being so disqualified, as aforesaid, who shall vote at any such election shall forfeit the sum of £20, to be recoverable by any person who shall sue for the same in any action in any of Her Majesty's Courts of Record at Westminster.

XVI. For the purpose of forming registers of all persons entitled to vote at any election, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the clerk of the peace for every county and the town clerk of every borough shall cause a sufficient number of forms of precepts, notices, claims, lists, and circulars to be printed according to the respective forms numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and of the table of fees in the Schedule B to this Act; and shall also, on the 24th day of May in every year, make and cause to be delivered to the overseers of the poor of every parish within his county, or within his borough, as the case may be, his precept, according to the form numbered 1 in the said Schedule B to this Act, together with a sufficient number of the said printed forms of notices, claims, lists, and circulars, and of the copies of such part of the qualification register of voters then in force for such county or borough as shall relate to such parish, and of copies of the table of fees for the purposes hereinafter mentioned.

XVII. The overseers of the poor in every parish

shall, on or before the 1st day of June in every year, publish a notice, according to the form numbered 2 in the said Schedule B to this Act, having first signed the same, stating that no person will be entitled to have his name inserted in the list of voters for such parish then next to be made in respect of the occupation of any lands or tenements of the clear yearly value of not less than £10, situate wholly or in part within such parish, unless he shall pay on or before the 24th day of June then next ensuing all the poor rates which shall have become payable from him in respect of such premises previously to the 25th day of December then last past, and requiring all persons entitled to vote at such election in respect of the occupation of apartments or the portion of any house within such parish, and all persons resident within such parish, and entitled to vote in respect of an income derived from personal property, or from pension, pay, or superannuation allowance, or as depositors in a savings bank, and all persons resident within such parish or township having any one of the educational qualifications entitling them under this Act to vote in respect thereof, and also all other persons entitled to be registered who, though not herein required to send in a claim, may think fit so to do, and who are desirous of having their names inserted in the register about to be made, to give or send to the said overseers, on or before the 24th day of July then next ensuing, a claim to vote, as aforesaid; and every such person shall, on or before the said 24th day of July, deliver or send to the said overseers a claim, according to the form applicable to his particular qualification, and as set forth in that behalf in the Schedule B to this Act.

XVIII. The overseers shall, on or before the 24th day of July in every year, make out, according to the form numbered 9 in the said Schedule B, an alphabetical list of all persons other than freemen, who, on or before the 24th day of June then next preceding, shall appear to be on the said copy of the qualification register of voters then in force for such county or

borough, omitting all names against which the letter A shall have been printed in such register, according to the provisions hereinafter contained, or who shall, without being on the said register, and without making any claim, be entitled to be registered in respect of any one of the several qualifications hereinbefore specified arising out of lands or tenements, or who shall in due form, as herein prescribed, have claimed in respect of any one of the several qualifications hereinbefore specified for which a claim is required; and such list shall be called "The List of Voters" and in every such list the Christian name and surname of every such person, with his profession, trade, or calling, and the place of his abode, the nature of his qualification, and the local or other description of the property, and the name of the occupying tenant of any property so occupied, shall be written, and in the case of claimants the particulars of the qualification shall be set forth as the same are stated in the claim; and the said overseers, if they shall have reasonable cause to believe that any person whose name shall appear in such list of voters is not entitled to have his name upon the register then next to be made, shall add the word "objected" before the name of every such person on the margin of such list of voters; and the said overseers shall also add the word "dead" before the name of any person in the said list whom they shall have reasonable cause to believe to be dead; and the overseers shall cause a sufficient number of copies of such list of voters, with all such marginal additions, as aforesaid, to be printed, and in such list all the names which have not been taken from the copy of the register then in force, as aforesaid, shall be printed in italics, and they shall, on or before the 1st day of August, sign and publish the same; and the said overseers shall likewise keep a copy of such list of voters, with the marginal additions respectively, as aforesaid, signed by them, to be perused by any person, without payment of any fee, or at any time between the hours of ten of the clock in the forenoon and four of the clock in the afternoon of any day, except Sunday,

during the first fourteen days after the same shall have been published, and shall deliver written or printed copies thereof, signed by them, to all persons applying for the same, on payment of a price for each copy, after the rate contained in the table of fees in the Schedule B to this Act: Provided always, That it shall be lawful for any person entitled to be registered in respect of his estate or interest in lands or tenements to send to the overseers of the parish where such lands or tenements shall be situate, on or before the 24th day of July, a claim according to the form numbered 8 in the Schedule B to this Act, or to the like effect, if he shall so think fit.

XIX. the town-clerk of every borough shall, on or before the 1st day of August in each year, make out, according to the form numbered 15 in the said Schedule B, an alphabetical list of all the freemen of such borough who may be entitled under the provisions hereinbefore contained to vote in the election of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament for such borough, to be called "The List of Voters entitled as Freemen," together with the respective places of their abode, and shall sign such list, and cause copies thereof to be printed, and shall publish the said list on or before the 1st day of August in such year, and shall likewise keep a copy thereof to be perused by any person, without payment of any fee, at any time between the hours of ten of the clock in the forenoon and four of the clock in the afternoon of any day, except Sunday, during the first fourteen days after such lists shall have been published, and shall deliver copies thereof to all persons applying for the same, on payment of a price for each copy, after the rate contained in the table of fees in the schedule to this Act.

XX. Nothing herein contained shall alter or affect the mode of preparing and publishing the lists of such of the freemen of the City of London as are liverymen of the several companies entitled to vote in the election of Members to serve in Parliament for the City of London.

XXI. Every person not by this Act specially required

to claim to be registered, as aforesaid, whose name shall have been omitted in any such list of voters so to be made out, as aforesaid, and who shall be entitled to have his name inserted therein, and every person desirous of being registered for a different qualification than that for which his name appears in the said list, or of correcting any error as to name, place of abode, or description of his qualification in such list, shall, on or before the 24th day of August in that year, give a notice according to the form numbered 8 in the said Schedule B, or to the like effect, to the overseers of that parish, in the list whereof he shall claim to have his name inserted, or if he shall claim as a freeman of any borough, then he shall, in like manner, give to the town-clerk of such borough a notice, according to the form numbered 14 in the said Schedule B, or to the like effect; and the overseers and town-clerks, respectively, shall include the names of all persons so claiming, as aforesaid, in lists to be called "The Supplemental List of Voters," according to the forms numbered 10 and 18, respectively, in the said Schedule B: Provided always, That every person so omitted and appearing upon the supplemental list of voters shall be required to prove his right to vote, or the fact required to be corrected, at the court to be held by the revising barrister, or his claim shall be disallowed; and such revising barrister, where any such claim is made for the purpose of correcting an error or misdescription in the said list of voters, shall, upon due proof being furnished to his satisfaction, correct the same accordingly.

XXII. Any original or supplemental claim made in respect of the ownership or occupation of any lands or tenements may be signed by any other person on behalf of the claimant: Provided, That the person so signing on behalf of another shall add his own name and place of abode, and shall be liable to the payment of costs, as hereinafter provided in the case of claimants, in the event of such claim being decided by the revising barrister to be frivolous.

XXIII. Every person whose name shall have been

inserted in any list of voters for a county or borough may object to any other person upon any list of voters for such county or borough, as not having been entitled on the 24th day of June then next preceding to have his name inserted in any list of voters for such county or borough, and every person so objecting shall, on or before the 24th day of August in such year, give or send by post to the overseers of the parish, or the town clerk of the borough to which the list of voters containing the name of the person so objected to may relate, as the case may be, a notice, according to the form numbered 11 or 16 in the said Schedule B, or to the like effect, and the person, as well overseers as others, so objecting, in the manner hereinbefore mentioned, shall, on or before the 24th day of August, give to the party so objected to, or send to him by post, at his place of abode, as described in such list, a notice, according to the form numbered 14 in the said Schedule B, or to the like effect; and every such notice of objection shall be signed by the party or overseer, as the case may be, so objecting, and whenever the place of abode of the person objected to, as described in the said list, shall not be in the parish to which such list may relate, and the name of the occupying tenant of the whole or any part of the qualifying property, together with his place of abode, shall appear in such list, the person so objecting shall also, on or before the same day, give or send by post to any such occupying tenant, at his place of abode, a duplicate notice signed as aforesaid.

XXIV. Every person, as well overseers as others, objecting in the manner hereinbefore provided to the name of any other person, shall specify, in the notice of objection to be sent by him, the grounds of objection upon which he intends to rely, whether it be that he has not a qualification entitling him to be registered, or that his qualification or place of abode is not accurately described, and upon the revision of the lists before the revising barrister, the person so objected to shall not be required to give any evidence in support of his right to be registered, except in so far as the same shall have

been disputed in such grounds of objection, and it shall not be competent for the overseer, or party objecting, to give any evidence in support of any other objection.

XXV. The overseers shall include the names of all persons so objected to in a list, according to the form numbered 13 in the said Schedule B, and the town-clerk shall include the names of all persons so objected to as freemen in a list, according to the form numbered 17 in the said Schedule B; and the said overseers and town-clerk respectively shall sign the same, and shall publish such lists, and also the said list of supplemental claims, on or before the 1st day of September, and shall also keep copies of the said lists, and shall allow the same, and also the notices of objection which they shall have received, to be perused by any person, without payment of any fee, at any time between the hours of ten of the clock in the forenoon and four of the clock in the afternoon of any day, except Sunday, during the first fourteen days of the said month of September, and shall deliver a copy of such lists to any person requiring the same, on payment of a price for each copy, after the rate contained in the said table of fees.

XXVI. On or before the first day of September in every year the overseer of every parish shall deliver to the clerk of the peace of the county, or to the town-clerk of the borough wherein such parish is situate, the said list of voters, with the marginal additions thereto as aforesaid, and also the said list of supplemental claims, and also the list of objections, respectively signed, as aforesaid, relating to their parish.

XXVII. It shall be lawful for any person whose name shall be on any list of voters for the time being, for any county or borough, and for any person who shall have claimed to have his name inserted in any such list, upon request made by such person at any time between the 24th day of July and the 24th day of August, to inspect and make extracts from the rate-books, in the manner and between the hours provided in the 16th section of the Act of the 6th year of Her Majesty, cap. 18.

XXVIII. At every court to be holden by any revising barrister for the revision of any list of voters, all witnesses examined before him shall be examined upon oath, and it shall be lawful for such barrister, at his discretion, to receive in evidence affidavits, solemn affirmations, or declarations, made before any justice of the peace, or other person authorised to administer oaths in any of Her Majesty's courts of law or equity, in support of any right to be registered, or objection thereto, or negativing the grounds alleged in any notice of objection to any person on such lists, and every person who shall wilfully swear, affirm, or declare falsely, in any affidavit, affirmation, or declaration to be so used, or when examined on oath before any revising barrister at any court holden as aforesaid, shall be guilty of misdemeanour and subject to the penalties of perjury.

XXIX. And whereas it is provided in the 40th section of the said Act, passed in the sixth year of Her Majesty, that no evidence shall be given of any other qualification than that which is described in the list of voters or claims, and that the barrister shall not be at liberty to change the description of the qualification as it appears in the list, except for the purpose of more clearly and accurately defining the same: Be it enacted, That it shall be lawful for such barrister to change the description of the qualification, and to amend the same, and to receive evidence in support thereof, whenever he shall be satisfied with the person whose right is in question is entitled to be registered for such altered or amended qualification, and that the misdescription or error was not made with the intention to mislead any person as to the right of such person to be registered.

XXX. The revising barrister shall write before the names of all such persons inserted on the list of voters as are required to renew their claims annually, the letter A, and in printing the register in the manner hereinafter provided, such letter A shall be placed before the name of such person in the register, and the names of all such persons shall be omitted in the

ensuing year from the list of voters to be made by the overseers as aforesaid, unless they shall have duly sent in their claims in the manner hereinbefore provided.

XXXI. Every clerk of the peace for a county, and every town clerk for any borough, shall upon the request of any person objected to, or objecting to any other person, or their respective agents, issue a summons, according to the form in the Schedule E to this Act, requiring the attendance of any witness to be named in such summons to attend and be examined before such revising barrister, and every such summons shall be served personally upon the witness whose attendance is required; and if any person so summoned as a witness shall, after a tender of reasonable compensation for his time and expenses, neglect or refuse to appear before such barrister at the time and place for that purpose appointed, without a reasonable excuse for such neglect or refusal to be allowed by such barrister, or if any person so summoned shall appear, but refuse to be examined or give evidence before such barrister, every person so offending shall forfeit any sum not exceeding £5, to be fixed by order under the hand of such barrister, and to be recovered in the manner provided in the 71st section of the said Act of the sixth year of the reign of Her Majesty.

XXXII. In order to discourage frivolous and vexatious claims and objections, be it enacted, that the power of the revising barrister to give costs under the 46th section of the said Act of the sixth year of the reign of Her Majesty shall be enlarged, so as to enable such barristers to give costs to the extent of £5 in the cases therein provided.

XXXIII. Any person objected to, and also any person objecting to any other person, as aforesaid, may send to the overseers, or other person objecting, or to the person objected to, as the case may be, not less than one week before the time appointed for the revision of the lists by the revising barrister, a notice, stating that such person objected to, or objecting to any other person, does not intend to support his right to be registered,

or his objection, as the case may be; and in such case no claim for costs shall arise.

XXXIV. The lists of voters for each county, signed by the revising barrister, shall be forthwith transmitted by him to the clerk of the peace of the county, and the clerk of the peace shall keep the said lists among the records of the sessions, and shall forthwith cause the said lists to be copied and printed in a book, to be called "The Qualification Register," arranged with the names in each parish in strict alphabetical order, according to the surnames, and with every polling place or district in strict alphabetical order, and with every parish within such polling district likewise in the same order and with a number prefixed to the name of each person in regular succession; and in order to enable voters to vote with less trouble and expense, the clerk of the peace, in addition to such qualification register, shall also make out and print in the said book another register, to be called "The Voting Register," wherein every polling district and every parish in each polling district shall be arranged in strict alphabetical order, and wherein in each parish shall also be arranged in strict alphabetical order the name of every voter residing in such parish, with his place of abode, as described in the said lists, and before the name of each voter shall be placed the same number as is affixed thereto in the qualification register, and the names of all such voters as shall reside out of such county shall be arranged together in the said voting register in strict alphabetical order, to be headed "The List of Out-Voters or Non-Residents," and every such qualification register and voting register shall be printed in the forms numbered 1 and 2 in the Schedule C to this Act, and shall be arranged in such manner and form that the list of voters residing in each separate parish or township, and also the list of out-voters or non-residents, may be conveniently and completely cut or detached from all the other lists of voters contained in the same book, so that all the lists for every or for any polling place or district, or the list of every or any single parish, may be ready for the pur-

poses of this Act or for sale; and the said clerk of the peace shall sign and deliver the said voting register, with the qualification register, on or before the 31st day of December in the then current year, to the returning officer of the county, to be by him and his successors safely kept for the purposes in the said recited Act of the sixth year of Her Majesty and this Act mentioned.

XXXV. The lists of voters for each borough, signed by the revising barrister, shall be forthwith delivered to the town clerk of the borough, who shall forthwith cause a qualification register and a voting register to be made out and printed from such lists, in the manner and according to the directions hereinbefore provided, with regard to the county lists of voters, so far as the same are applicable, save that, instead of the parishes, the streets or wards of such borough shall be arranged therein in strict alphabetical order, and the name of each voter residing in each such street or ward, with his place of abode, shall be so arranged, and the said town clerk shall sign and deliver the said qualification register and voting register, on or before the 31st day of December, to the returning officer of the borough, to be by him and his successors safely kept for the purposes in the said recited Act of the sixth year of Her Majesty and this Act mentioned.

XXXVI. The said printed books containing the qualification register and voting register, so signed and delivered as aforesaid, shall be the register of persons entitled to vote at any election of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament which shall take place for such county or borough during the year commencing the 1st day of January then next, and ending on the 31st day of December; and every such clerk of the peace and town clerk shall keep printed copies of their respective registers, and shall deliver copies of such registers, or of any part thereof, to any person applying for the same, after the rate contained in the table of fees in the Schedule B to this Act: Provided always, That no person shall be entitled to a copy of any part of any register

relating to any parish without paying for the whole that relates to such parish.

XXXVII. Every voter inserted in such voting register as residing within the county or borough, shall vote at the polling place appointed for the parish in which he shall be registered as residing, and not elsewhere; and every voter inserted in such voting register as an out-voter or non-resident, may vote at any polling place for such county or borough, provided that every such out-voter upon tendering his vote at any election, shall be asked by the returning officer or his deputy whether he has voted before in person or by voting paper at such election: and any person making an untrue answer to such question, or who shall, without being asked such question, vote a second time at such election, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and on being convicted thereof, shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, together with hard labour.

XXXVIII. The justices of the peace assembled at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions, to be holden next after the passing of this Act, shall appoint proper and convenient places for polling in every county, so that there may be a polling place in every parish or township in which there shall not be less than 200 resident electors, and a polling place for every two or more parishes or townships, in either of which, separately there shall be less than 200 resident electors, at some central or convenient point at which, as nearly as possible, 200 voters from such smaller parishes or townships may most conveniently attend to record their votes; and the places so selected by the justices as the future polling places of the county, shall forthwith be duly advertised as they shall think fit; and the justices shall, from time to time, vary and alter such polling places as they shall think expedient, provided that it shall not be incumbent upon the revising barrister appointed to revise such lists as aforesaid, to attend at any polling places at which less than 500 voters shall be appointed to poll.

XXXIX. At every contested election for any county, unless some building or place belonging to the county

shall be provided by the justices for that purpose, the sheriff shall, whenever it is practicable so to do, instead of erecting a booth, hire a building or room for the purpose of taking the poll at the places so appointed by the justices as aforesaid, and the expense incurred by the said sheriff in the hire of rooms or erecting booths for polling, shall be paid to him by the justices for such county out of the county rate.

XL. And whereas it is expedient that an appeal from the decision of any revising barrister, contemplated by the 42nd section of the said Act of the sixth year of Her Majesty, should be granted in all cases in which the same is demanded, be it enacted that the revising barrister shall in all cases, upon notice being given to him, as provided in the said recited Act, state in writing the facts which, according to his judgment, shall have been established by the evidence of the case, and which shall be material to the matter in question, and shall also state in writing his decision upon the whole case, and also his decision upon the point of law in question appealed against; and such appeal shall be stated and dealt with in the manner provided in the said recited Act, passed in the sixth year of Her Majesty.

XLI. The 79th section of the said Act, passed in the sixth year of Her Majesty, is hereby repealed, and, instead thereof, be it enacted that at any future election of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament for any county or borough, the register of voters so made as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken to be conclusive evidence that the persons therein named continue to have the qualifications which are annexed to their names respectively in the register in force at such election.

XLII. And whereas it is expedient to afford greater facilities for voting to persons who, at the time of holding any election, shall be absent from or living beyond the limits of the county or borough in respect of which they are registered, or who shall desire to be relieved from attending in person to vote at such election, be it enacted, that any voter may, after the issuing

of the writ for holding such election, apply in writing, either by himself or by some person on his behalf, to the returning officer for a voting paper, and in such application shall be stated the number attached to his nane in the register, the particulars of his qualification as therein described, according to the form No. 1 in the Schedule D to this Act, or to the like effect, and the returning officer shall forthwith, upon the receipt of such request, fill up and transmit to the voter, by a prepaid registered letter through the post, directed to him at the address indicated in the request, a voting paper, in the form and according to the directions given in the forms numbered 2 and 3 to the Schedule D to this Act annexed.

XLIII. Every voter receiving such voting paper shall fill in his own name, and also the name or names of the candidate or candidates at such election for whom he intends to vote, and shall sign the same in the presence of two witnesses, one of whom must be a householder, and such witnesses shall, in addition to signing their names, state their profession, trade, or calling, and their place of abode.

XLIV. The voting paper, so signed and witnessed as aforesaid, shall be returned by the voter signing the same through the post as a prepaid registered letter, directed to the returning officer from whom the same shall have been received at the address given by him in such voting paper.

XLV. The returning officer shall appoint a deputy to receive all such voting papers at the place to which they shall be so directed, and he shall give notice to each candidate of the name of such deputy, and of the place where such deputy will, on the day of polling, open such voting papers, in order that the said candidates or their agents may attend the said deputy thereat; and such deputy shall, between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and four o'clock in the afternoon of such day, and in the presence of the candidates or their agents, if they shall think fit to attend, open the said papers, and read out from each of them the votes given

for the several candidates at such election, and shall duly record such votes in a poll book, as the same are given for such candidates in such voting papers; and in adding up the poll the votes so given shall be reckoned in favour of the respective candidates, together with the votes given in person at such election; but no voting paper shall be opened which shall not have been delivered at the place to which they shall be so directed, as aforesaid, before the close of the poll.

XLVI. It shall not be lawful for the returning officer to reject any voting paper which he shall have received through the post, and which shall have so arrived before the closing of the poll, on account of any informality in filling up the same, provided that such paper shall purport to contain the surname of the candidate or candidates for whom the vote is intended to be given, and to have been signed in the presence of two witnesses, duly witnessing the same, and that the names of no more candidates are inserted in such voting paper than such voter would have been entitled to vote for if he had voted in person at such election.

XLVII. All voting papers received and recorded by the recording officer at any such election, as well as any voting papers which shall have been rejected by him for informality, or as having arrived too late, shall be filed by him, and any person shall be allowed to examine the same at all reasonable times, and to have copies thereof, upon the terms herein provided in the table of fees in Schedule B to this Act.

XLVIII. Any person falsely personating any other person whose name appears on any register of voters for any county or borough, whether such other person shall then be living or dead, or falsely assuming to sign any voting paper in the name of such other person, and any person counterfeiting the name or signature of any witness to any voting paper, and every person tendering or transmitting as genuine any false or counterfeit voting paper, or aiding in so doing, knowing the same to be false or counterfeit in any particular, and any person voting more than once at any election for any county

or borough, either in person or by voting paper, or by both, although no question shall be put to him touching his right to vote thereat, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and on being convicted thereof shall be punishable by fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

XLIX. The clerk of the peace of every county, and the town clerk of every borough, shall, immediately after the passing of this Act, cause to be printed, and shall at all times afterwards keep, a sufficient quantity of voting papers, in the forms numbered 2 and 3 in the said Schedule D, in their respective offices; and upon the issuing of a writ for holding an election for any county or borough, the said clerk of the peace or town clerk shall deliver to the returning officer such number of the said voting papers as he may require, upon being paid the cost price of printing the same.

L. The expenses incurred in printing such voting papers, and transmitting them to voters, shall be charged by the returning officer to, and shall be paid by, the candidate or candidates at such election, in the proportion in which the voters to whom such voting papers shall have been issued shall have recorded their votes in favour of such candidate or candidates respectively.

LI. The provisions herein contained relating to voting papers shall extend and apply to the voting at the election of any Member or Members for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, so far as the same are applicable; and the Vice-Chancellors of the said Universities respectively shall, upon the request of any person entitled to vote at any such election, issue to such person, in the manner and at the times hereinbefore provided, a voting paper, in the forms numbered 2 and 3 in the Schedule D to this Act, or to the like effect, and shall open and record the votes therefrom, and otherwise deal with the same in the manner hereinbefore provided.

LII. It shall not be lawful for any candidate at any election to pay any money on account of the conveyance of any voter to the poll, either to the voter himself or

to any other person; and if any such candidate, or any person on his behalf and with his authority, shall pay any money on account of the conveyance of any voter to the poll, such payment shall be deemed to be an illegal payment within the meaning of "The Corrupt Practices Prevention Act, 1854."

LIII. In all future Parliaments, each of the boroughs enumerated in the Schedule G to this Act annexed shall, from and after the end of this present Parliament, return one Member, and no more, to serve in Parliament.

LIV. The southern division of the county of Lancaster shall be divided and formed into two divisions; the West Riding of the county of York shall be divided into three divisions, and the county of Middlesex shall be divided into two divisions; and such divisions of the county of Lancaster, of the West Riding of the county of York, and of the county of Middlesex, shall consist of the hundreds, wapentakes, and parishes respectively, as described in the Schedule H to this Act annexed, and in all future Parliaments there shall be two knights of the shire to serve for each of such divisions; and the court for the election of knights of the shire for each of such divisions shall be holden at the place named for that purpose in the said Schedule H, and all enactments now in force applicable to divisions of counties returning knights of the shire to serve in Parliament, and all enactments hereinafter contained applicable to such divisions of counties, shall be deemed and taken to extend and apply to the divisions constituted as aforesaid,

LV. Each of the places named in Schedule I to this Act annexed shall, for the purposes of this Act, be a borough, and shall, as such borough, be comprised within the boundaries, and shall include the places specified in the said Schedule I, in connection with such borough, and each of the said boroughs named in the said Schedule I shall, from and after the end of the present Parliament, return one Member to serve in Parliament.

LVI. In each of the boroughs named in Schedule I to this Act annexed, which are now incorporated, or within which there shall be any incorporated place, the mayor or other chief municipal officer for such borough or place, for the time being, shall be the returning officer for such borough, and in each of the boroughs of the said Schedule I which are not now incorporated, and in which there shall be no incorporated place, the sheriff, for the time being, of the county in which each of such unincorporated boroughs is situate shall, within two months after the passing of this Act, and in every succeeding year in the month of March, by writing under his hand, to be delivered to the clerk of the peace of the county, and to be by such clerk of the peace filed and preserved with the records of his office, nominate and appoint, for such respective borough, a fit person, being resident therein, to be, and such person so nominated and appointed shall accordingly be, the returning officer for such respective borough until the nomination to be made in the succeeding month of March; and the provisions contained in the 11th section of the said Act of the second year of King William IV., providing for the event of the death or incapacity of any person appointed as returning officer for any borough, and exempting any person so appointed from serving again in the same office, and disqualifying certain persons from being so appointed, and persons so appointed from being appointed churchwardens or overseers, and providing for the case of a charter of incorporation being granted to any borough, shall extend and be applicable in relation to the nomination and appointment of returning officers for the said unincorporated boroughs in the said Schedule I to this Act, and the returning officers to be nominated and appointed for the same under this enactment; and for the purposes of this provision the borough of Stalybridge shall be deemed to be situated in the county of Chester.

LVII. And whereas, in the case of divers boroughs returning a Member or Members to serve in Parliament,

the population properly belonging to such boroughs has extended beyond the Parliamentary limits thereof, and a large proportion of the inhabitants of the towns or places comprising such boroughs are without any voice in the election of the Member or Members for such boroughs; and whereas, it is desirable that in all such cases, the boundaries of boroughs should be so enlarged as to comprise within them every part of the population substantially forming part of such boroughs: Be it enacted, That the "Enclosure Commissioners" for England and Wales shall, immediately after the passing of this Act, appoint special assistant-commissioners, who shall forthwith visit every borough in England and Wales, and examine the boundaries of such borough and the location of the inhabitants, and the said Enclosure Commissioners shall, on or before the 1st day of January next after the passing of this Act, report to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any enlargement of the present boundaries of such boroughs is necessary, in order to include within the area thereof the population properly belonging to such boroughs respectively, and in such report shall propose such new boundaries as in their judgment would effect that object, with the view of being submitted to Parliament in the ensuing session; and the assistant commissioners so appointed, shall give notice by public advertisement of their intention to visit such boroughs, and shall appoint a time for receiving the statement of any persons who may be desirous of giving information as to the boundaries or other local circumstances of such boroughs, and shall, by personal inspection and such other means as they shall think necessary, possess themselves of such information as will enable them to make such report and recommendation as aforesaid.

LVIII. Every person on whom, under the provisions hereinbefore contained, a right of voting at any election for any county or borough is conferred shall, subject to the conditions affecting such right, be entitled to vote at any election of a Member or Members to serve in

Parliament for such county or borough, which shall take place after the 31st of December, 1859, and subject to the conditions affecting his right to be registered in any year, shall be entitled to be registered in any register of voters to be formed for such county or borough in or after the year 1859.

LIX. Registers of voters shall be formed in and after the year 1859, notwithstanding the continuance of this present Parliament, for or in respect of the several new divisions of counties and the boroughs constituted by this Act, in like manner as if they were respectively divisions of counties and boroughs now returning Members to serve in Parliament.

LX. If, by reason of a dissolution of the present Parliament, or by any avoidance of a seat therein which may take effect after the passing of this Act, and before the day at and from which the registers of voters to be framed under the provisions of this Act shall be in force, in such case such persons only shall be entitled to vote at any election for any county or borough now returning Members to serve in Parliament, as are upon the registers in force for such county or borough at the time of such dissolution or avoidance.

LXI. If a dissolution of the present Parliament shall take effect after the passing of this Act, before the day at and from which the register of voters to be framed under the provisions of this Act shall be in force, in such case the writs for the new divisions of counties and the new boroughs hereby created shall not be issued until the time when such registers shall be in force.

LXII. If this Act shall not be passed before the day fixed therein for the issuing of a precept by the clerk of the peace or town clerk to the overseers, then and in such case such precept shall be issued by such clerk of the peace or town clerk respectively to the overseers of the poor, on such day as Her Majesty shall, by and with the advice of her Privy Council, order and direct; and all notices shall be published, and all other acts, for the purpose of forming a complete register of voters for every county and borough, according to the provisions

of this Act, shall be done on the several days specified in such Order in Council, in lieu of the days hereinbefore specified; and such order shall provide for the same intervals between the several acts necessary to be done in the formation of the register of voters as are by this Act provided between the several days herein named.

LXIII. So much of the several Acts of Parliament mentioned in the Schedule F to this Act as is specified concerning the same Acts respectively in the third column of the said Schedule shall be and is hereby repealed.

LXIV. So much of the Act of the sixth year of Her Majesty as is not hereby repealed shall, as amended by this Act, be applicable for the registration of persons entitled to vote, and to the rights of voting, and to proceedings in the elections of Members to serve in Parliament under this Act, as if several enactments herein contained relating to the matters contained in the said recited Act had originally been inserted in and formed part of the said recited Act.

LXV. No person shall be entitled to be registered, or to vote at any election of a Member to serve in Parliament, unless he shall have some one of the qualifications hereinbefore defined, and subject to the provisions of this Act, all laws, statutes, usages, provisions, and penalties now in force respecting the registration of voters and election of Members to serve in Parliament for England and Wales, not hereby repealed, shall be and remain in full force.

LXVI. All writs to be issued for the election of Members to serve in Parliament, and all notices and other proceedings consequent upon such writs, shall be framed and expressed in such manner and form as may be necessary for carrying the provisions of the Act into effect.

LXVII. This Act shall not extend to Scotland or Ireland, nor shall it extend to either of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, except as hereinbefore provided in regard to voting papers.

LXVIII. Whereas by the Act of the sixth year of

the reign of Queen Anne, chapter 7, all persons appointed to offices of profit under the Crown, and therefore duly elected as Members of the House of Commons, are required to vacate their seats upon their acceptance of any other office of profit under the Crown, and it is expedient to alter the laws in this respect: Be it therefore enacted, That if any person appointed to any office of profit under the Crown, and thereafter duly returned as a Member of the House of Commons, shall, while he continues to be such Member, accept any office of profit under the Crown (except an office which by law incapacitates the holder thereof from being elected or from voting in Parliament), the acceptance of such other office shall not render the election of such person void, nor shall any writ thereupon issue for a new election.

LXIX. Throughout this Act, and in the Schedules hereto, the following words shall have the meanings respectively given to them in this section, except there be something in the subject or context inconsistent with or repugnant to such meaning.

The word "county" shall include any county, riding, parts, or divisions of a county, in England and Wales.

The word "borough" shall include any city borough, city, or town, being a county of itself, town corporate, cinque port, district, place or places, within England or Wales, returning a Member or Members to serve in Parliament, and every place sharing therewith in such election, and the town of Berwick-on-Tweed.

The words "clerk of the peace" shall comprehend and apply to any deputy or other person executing the duties of such clerk of the peace.

The words "town clerk" shall extend to and include any persons executing the duties of town clerk, or if in any city or borough there shall be no such officer as town clerk, then to any officer executing the same or like duties as usually devolve upon the town clerk, or if in any city or borough there be no such person, then to the returning officer of such city or borough, or to such person as the returning officer may appoint for that purpose, which he is hereby authorised to do, and the

town clerk for the borough of Newport, in the Isle of Wight, shall, for the purposes of this Act, be taken to be the clerk of the peace for the county of the Isle of Wight.

The word "Member" shall include a Knight of the Shire.

The word "election" shall mean the election of any Knight or Knights of the Shire, or any Member or Members to serve in Parliament.

The words "returning officer" shall include the sheriff of any county, and apply to every person or persons to whom, by virtue or his or their office, under any law, custom, or statute, the execution of any writ doth or shall belong for the election of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament, by whatever name or title such person or persons may be called.

The word "parish" shall extend to and mean every parish, township, village, hamlet, district, or place maintaining its own poor.

The word "overseers" shall include all persons who, by virtue of an office or appointment, shall execute the duties of overseers of the poor, by whatever name or title such persons may be called, and in whatever manner they may be appointed; and all matters by this Act directed to be done by the overseers of a parish or township, may be lawfully done by the majority of such overseers.

The words "list of voters" shall mean the list of voters for the election of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament.

The word "register" shall mean the register of voters entitled to vote in the election of a Knight or Knights of the Shire, or a Member or Members to serve in Parliament for any county, city, or borough.

The words "revising barrister" shall mean the revising barrister or barristers appointed to revise the list of voters for any county, city, or borough.

LXX. In citing this Act in any instrument, document, or proceeding, or for any purpose whatsoever, it shall be sufficient to use the expression, "The Parliamentary Representation Act, 1859."

[The formal Schedules above referred to are omitted.]

SCHEDULE G.

BOROUGHS NOW RETURNING TWO MEMBERS WHICH, ARE IN FUTURE TO RETURN ONE MEMBER EACH.

Honiton.	Wells.	Ludlow.
Thetford.	Richmond.	Andover.
Totnes.	Marlborough.	Knaresborough.
Harwich.	Leominster.	Tewkesbury.
Evesham.	Lymington.	Maldon.

SCHEDULE I.

PLACES TO BE BOROUGHS TO RETURN ONE MEMBER EACH, WITH CONTENTS OF THEIR BOUNDARIES.

West Bromwich, Staffordshire—The parishes of West Bromwich and Wednesbury.

Birkenhead, Cheshire—The township or chapelry of Birkenhead; townships of Claughton-cum-Grange, Oxton, and Tranmere.

Burnley, Lancashire—The townships of Burnley and Habergham Eaves.

Stalybridge, Cheshire and Lancashire—The town of Stalybridge, as the limits thereof are declared by an Act passed in the ninth year of King George IV., entitled "An Act for lighting, watching, and otherwise improving the town of Stalybridge, in the counties palatine of Lancaster and Chester, and for regulating the police thereof, and for establishing and regulating a market, and erecting a market place within the said town"; and the township of Dunkinfield so far as the same is not comprised within those limits.

Croydon, Surrey—The parish of Croydon and the hamlet of Penge.

Gravesend, Kent—The parishes of Gravesend, Milton, and Northfleet.

Hartlepool, Durham—The parishes, townships, and places of Hartlepool, West Hartlepool, Stranton, Briarton, Seaton Carew, Greatham, Claxton, Hart, Throston, Elwick, Elwick-hall, Dalton Percy, and Thorp Bulmer.

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